BLACK MALE PRESIDENTS OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES: A LIFE NARRATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Derrick R. Drakeford: Black Male Presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Life Narrative Study
(Under the direction of Sherick Hughes and Charles Price)

There is a gap in the academic literature on Black male identity formation, in relation to, Black male leadership development. This dissertation attempts to address a portion of that gap by examining the life narratives of Black males with at least a decade of experience leading Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The central inquiry guiding this examination asks: What identity and leadership qualities of three Black males emerge as conducive to acquiring and sustaining their positions as Presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities? This original research uses qualitative life narrative methodology, including in-depth life narrative interviews, focused observations, and critical reviews of documents linked to the three participants. An analysis of their lives provides evidence to support a multi-faceted explanation of how these men used functions of identity and concepts of dynamic leadership to navigate within society. The data found these men enacted various aspects of Black identity including (a) *bridging*, bi- or multi-cultural competence; (b) *individualism*, youth leadership experience; (c) *buffering*, ability to translate challenges into opportunities; and (d) *bonding*, experience building Black organizations and programs. Secondly, this analysis provides a dynamic understanding of Black leaders who operate between

accommodation and *protest* views of leadership. Moreover, the findings provide

compelling insights into the development of Black male identities in relation to Black

leadership development toward the collective identification of Blackness.

Key Words: *Black American Male, Identity Formation, Leadership Development, HBCU Presidents*

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PREFACE

Notes on Style:

      I use a capital "B" when referring to Black people. Tatum (1993), Price (2009), and

Madhubuti (1990).

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

"Those different experiences that you have over the years contributes significantly to your
preparation for leadership, or administration, because if you just sit and work from theory, I say
you are going to have a learning curve" (i.e. a difficult learning journey)
–HBCU President Thomas (From Interview 2 of 3)

As President Thomas states, life experiences are the preparation for leadership.

Therefore, studying the life experiences of HBCU presidents can provide valuable lessons for

aspiring leaders. This study presents a qualitative approach to understanding Black identity and

leadership through an analysis of the life narratives of three Black American male presidents of

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The ways in which one leads are

expressions of his/her self-concept or real self (Ak'bar, 1989). Moreover, Bolman and Deal

(1997) describe "true leadership is not a tangible thing. It exists only in relationships and in the

imagination and perception of engaged parties" (p. 294). Hence, the self-perception (or self-

concept) of leaders and their ability to stretch the imagination of engaged parties around identity

(or self-concept) conducive in sustainable leadership.

Erickson (1968) and Marcia (1966) are foundational scholars in the field of psychology

who developed models of identity (or self-concept) development across life spans, including

adolescence and adulthood. Erickson (1968) and Marcia's (1966) identity formation models

introduced hierarchical categories to depict the identity formation process. Though nuanced at

the time a major flaw of these models were that they espoused the Eurocentric identity

experiences of Whites, while leaving silent the complexities of identity development for African

Americans. In the 1970s, African American scholars extended the work of Erickson (1968) and

Marcia (1966) to articulate models of African American identity development (Cross, 1971; Thomas, 1971; Jackson 1976). All of these scholars conclude similarly that a positive Black self-concept is essential for the healthy Black racial identity development of African Americans. However, research finds a wide variety of Black identity statuses, which include negative self-concepts such as internalized racism, colorism, and racial self hatred (Cross and Fhagen-Smith 2012; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997; Cross, 1971,; Jackson 1976). Scholars like Akbar (1989), Baldwin (1981), and Kunjufu (2013) write that for African Americans a positive Black self-concept and Afrocentric view are essential ingredients for a healthy Black psychology. To examine further how identity develops over time, scholars such as Cross (1971; 1978; 1995), Thomas (1971), and Price (2009) use qualitative research methods such as autobiography, ethnography, and life narrative to empirically study Black identity. Their work contributes to our understanding of how Black identity is influenced, informed, shaped, and maintained. This exploration into Black identity is informed by the pioneering work of Black psychologist, William Cross' (1971), article *Nigresence: The Process of Becoming Black*. Cross, Strauss, and Fhagen-Smith (1999) write,

> *Nigresence*-depicts the four or five stages Black people traverse during the transformation from a social outlook that minimizes race to a Black identity for which race and African American culture are highly central (p.30).

Like *Nigresence* reseach other identitiy studies in psychology also look at entire life spans of individuals through autobiographies, biographies, and life narratives (Erickson 1968; Jackson, 2001; Cross, 1993). In leadership research the dominant study methodology is to look specifically at the brief period of time and examine policy, speeches, and measurable outcomes (Covey, 1989; Collins, 2001). This, breif periof of time, approach lacks a deeper examination of how childhood, young adult, and adult life experiences impact how identity is enacted in

leadership. Research has found the life narrative method can reveal how effective leaders use self-concept to translate authenticity (Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Ligon, Hunter, & Mumford, 2008). Thus, this dissertation analyzes entire life narratives and experiences, which culminate into Black leadership identities. Such an approach is largely absent in educational research thereby, representing a gap in what we know about Black male identity formation in relation to Black male leadership development.

This dissertation attempts to address a portion of that gap by examining the lived experiences and opinions of Black males with at least ten years of experience as presidents of HBCUs. The central inquiry guiding this examination asks: *What identity and leadership qualities of three Black males emerge as conducive to acquiring and sustaining their positions as Presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities*? This original research engages qualitative life narrative methodology, including in-depth life narrative interviews, focused observations and critical reviews of documents linked to the three participants. An analysis of their lives was pursued in search of evidence to support a defensible explanation for why and how these three Black men became long-term HBCU presidents despite being born into the U.S. cultural context of institutional racism with its known inequitable influences on education, identity, and leadership development (Hughes & Berry, 2012; Tatum, 1992; West, 1999). The remaining text of this chapter presents in more depth: (a) the statement of the problem, (b) the purpose, (c) the significance and (d) the scope of the study.

Statement of the Problem

A Crisis of *White-Glasses*: The Cultural Deficit Model and Gaps in Black Male Identity and Leadership Development Research

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Owens (2012) resuscitates the common trope of Blacks and whites seeing race through different glasses as one way to explain their disparate responses to racialization. As I peer through my smudged glasses I see myself as a young miseducated Black male student who's self-concept and spark of genius was trapped in a pro-white and anti–Black mindset (Cross and Fhagen-Smith, 2012). In Cross' *Nigresence,* the first *pre-encounter* status depicts Black identity interpreted through a pro-White and anti-Black point of view (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009). This pro-White and anti-Black point of view can also be seen in educational research and current teaching practices (Tillman, 2002; Harper 2010; Morrow, 2003).

This study seeks to investigate the life narratives of Black male HBCU presidents to see the ways in which they developed alternatives to the pro-White/anti-Black viewpoint. Research finds Black male students encounter racial battle fatigue (William Smith 2004, 2009, 2011), micro-aggressions (Solorzano, et al 2000), and emotional stress (Harlow, 2003).

The American public educational system teaches all students to see the world through a Euro-centric view, this worldview is what I call *White-glasses* (Morrow, 2003). Educational researcher Asante (1990) writes,

> Centricity is a concept that can be applied to any culture. The centrist paradigm is supported by research showing that the most productive method of teaching any student is to place his or her group within the center of the context of knowledge.

When Black males, other ethnic minority students, are placed on the margins of the educational process it can negatively effect how identity is shaped (Akbar, 1995; Early, 1993; Massey & Denton, 1993; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1994). For example research also finds Asian American students face stereotype threat, verbal and physical abuse (Lee, 1996; Okihiro, 1994). Lee (1999) writes,

Experiences with racism serve to remind Asian American students that they are different from other racial minorities and that they are not seen as equal to White Americans (p.114).

As young Black males gather bits and pieces of information to form their Black racial identities, their data is being interpreted through a lens, which profiles Black identity as a problem (Alexander, 2012; Tatum, 2003; Cross, and Fhagen-Smith, 2012).

The crisis of *White-glasses*, under the larger umbrella of structural racism has historical roots dating back to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the rationale for the slavery of Blacks in America (Omni and Winant 2014; Albanese, 1976; Rushdy, 2012; Leary, 2005). The crisis of White glasses in educational spaces has multiple negative impacts on identity, perspective, and stereotypes (Kunjufu, 2013, 2006; Shujaa, 1993; Tatum, 1997). Two problems of the *crisis of White glasses* that are addressed here are:

1) The deficit perspectives on Black males in educational research (Valencia, 2002; Dillard, 2000; Kershaw, 1990, 1992; Tillman, 2002; Harper 2010, 2014).

2) Black male identity formation and leadership development as seen through dominant narratives of White privilege (McIntosh, 1998, Omni and Winant 2014; Tatum, 1997).

1. The deficit perspectives on Black males in educational research

There is paucity in the narratives and literature on Black male identity formation and leadership development, thus leaving a gap in what we know about the self-concepts of Black male leaders. It is important to view this gap in regards to the American sociocultural context of institutional racism and its impact on institutions of higher education. HBCUs and other institutions of higher education become central places for Black identity formation. Baldwin describes this process of

Black identity formation as "self liberation" (Baldwin & Kenan, 2010). W.E.B. DuBois likens

this self-liberation process to *a consciousness of latent powers*. DuBois writes:

> When a human being becomes suddenly conscious of the tremendous powers lying latent
> within him. When this happens in the case of a class or nation or a race, the world fears
> or rejoices according to the way in which it has been trained to contemplate a change in
> the conditions of the class or race in question. (Allen 2002 p. 258)

As DuBois notes, too many educators, of all races, have been "trained" to view Black men as a

deficit. This viewpoint discourages the consciousness of the "tremendous powers lying latent"

within Black male students. Thus, in an attempt to explain away the underachievement of Black

male students in the American educational system some teachers and researchers locate the

problem in the students themselves. In the article *Cultural Deficit Model* author Jason Irizarry

defines a deficit model as, "a perspective that blames the victims of institutional oppression for

their own victimization by referring to negative stereotypes and assumptions regarding certain

groups or communities" (Irizarry, 2009 p. 1). Irizarry describes how teachers and educational

researchers attempt to rationalize inequity through White glasses. In an article by, African

American educational researcher, Linda Tillman (2002) titled *Culturally Sensitive Research*

Approaches: An African American Prospective; Tillman presents a conceptualization of

culturally sensitive research for African Americans. Her framework includes:

1. ***Culturally Congruent Research Methods***, the use of qualitative methods such as
   interviews and life histories to investigate holistic, contextualized pictures of the
   social, political, and economic lives of everyday African Americans.

2. ***Culturally Specific Knowledge***, the use of unique self-defined (Black self-
   representations).

3. ***Cultural Resistance to Theoretical Dominance***, to reveal, understand, and respond to
   unequal power relations that minimize, marginalize, subjugate or exclude the multiple

realities and knowledge bases of African Americans. Research privilege is questioned as well as claims of neutrality and objectivity.

4. ***Culturally Sensitive Data Interpretations***, positions experiential knowledge as legitimate, appropriate, and necessary for analyzing, understanding, and reporting data.

5. ***Culturally Informed Theory and Practice***, the development of theories and practices intended to address the culturally specific circumstances of African Americans. (Tillman, 2002)

Similar to Tillman's (2002) enlightening work is that of African American educational researcher Shuan Harper (2010) whose article titled *An Anti-Deficit Achievement Framework for Research on Students of Color in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM),* examines a deficit bias in central research questions. Harper then reframes central research questions to present possible inquiries from an anti-deficit prospective. The following table lists some of the questions reframed to remove common deficit perspectives on Black male student participants.

Table 1: Anti-Deficit Reframing (Harper, 2010)

Deficit Oriented Questions	Anti-Deficit Reframing
Why are Black male students rates of persistence and degree attainment lowest among both sexes and all racial and ethnic groups in higher education?	How did Black men manage to persist and earn their degrees, despite transition issues, racist stereotypes academic under-preparedness, and other, forces.
Why are they so under-prepared for college level mathematics and science?	How do STEM achievers from low resource high schools transcend academic under-preparedness and previous educational disadvantage?
Why do so many change their majors to non-STEM fields?	What compels students of color to persist in STEM fields despite the academic challenge and the underrepresentation of same-race peers and faculty?

Harper's work on anti-deficit reframing sheds light on how subtle differences in research questions and approaches can impact study findings. Tillman (2002) and Harper (2010) are examples of Black scholars resisting dominant conceptions of Blackness to offer alternative interpretations of the Black experience in America.

In contrast, some researchers of color, also interpret through a *Eurocentric* viewpoint. Ama Mazama (2003) provides an astute historical analysis on this "colonized" viewpoint:

> "The ontological reduction of colonized people that is a necessary part of colonialism has been well understood and described thanks in particular to Albert Memmi (1991) and Frantz Fanon (1952; 1968). Those two authors exposed quite brilliantly the dialectical relationship that colonialism creates between a hyper-valorized colonial culture and a systematically denigrated colonized culture. Animality and puerility are two major metaphors on which the reductive discourse on the colonized is organized…the colonizer is made to symbolize the perfection of maturity and wisdom. The conclusion is self-evident: only through careful imitation of Europeans can colonized people hope to improve their lot (p. 4).

Mazama's (2003) analysis also describes how researchers may see academic success through *White glasses*, and mold their identities to 'imitate Europeans.' This Eurocentric imitation is seen in Fordham & Ogbu's (1986) acting White theory, which argued Black male students don't succeed out of a fear of acting White. Their theory has subsequently been debunked by studies that suggest otherwise. For example, the work of Tyson, Darity, and Castellino (2005) titled, *It's Not "A Black Thing": Understanding the Burden of Acting White and Other Dilemmas of High Achievement,* refutes the acting White theory. In this article the authors write:

> Social scientists have produced little empirical evidence to substantiate the claim that an "oppositional peer culture" or a "burden of acting White" is pervasive in the Black community, or that either explains the underachievement of Black students or some part of the Black-White achievement gap. Still, there is strong public belief in these assertions. Indeed, as we found in this study, the acting White theory significantly influences how schools address problems related to Black underachievement (p. 582).

Here, Tyson et al. (2005) show how stereotypes and a *White glasses* perspective remain to be the dominant narrative or "strong public belief", even though empirical evidence does not support

these beliefs. The Fordam and Ogbu (1986) example shows how an attempt to better understand the *internal* impacts of racism on Black males in America can potentially re-inscribe damaging myths of Black intellectual inferiority.

It is important for educational researchers to reflect on their privilege, position, and learned Eurocentric views, and how these paradigms may be reflected in research. Scholars like Ford (2010) acknowledge the lasting dangers of deficit models. Ford writes,

> for gifted Black students, reversing underachievement may be especially difficult if underachievement is related to social barriers such as racism, or deficit thinking (Ford, 2010 p. 4).

To add balance to educational research it is vital for educational researchers to explore anti-deficit narratives of Black male intellect and leadership. Deficit perspectives of Black men are often tied to deficit stereotypes of HBCU presidents. Hence when a Black man is leading an HBCU, he has to navigate through dominant narratives of Black male inferiority. Research studies by Wagener and Smith (1993), and Jencks and Reisman (1967) found HBCU presidents are often seen through deficit, *White glasses.* According to Wagener and Smith (1993), "as late as the 1960s, the HBCUs as a group suffered from stereotypes of presidents who rode around in limousines and lived in mansions while their colleges verged on the brink of fiscal disaster" (p. 40).

This Eurocentric frame also connects to the lineage of the first primary educational research on HBCUs, which was also conducted through a dominant narrative deficit perspective. A study titled *The American Negro College* by two white male Harvard professors, Jencks and Reisman (1967), used the philosophical underpinning of the, "White is Right" paradigm of Black psychology (Jencks, 1967, p. 5). The study states: "Whether one looked at hair styles, preferred

skin color, the drive to desegregate schools, brand-name choices, or overall ideology, it seemed

clear that for most Negroes 'White was right'" (Jencks, 1967, p. 5). The Jencks study failed to

recognize that HBCUs developed into institutions that became therapeutic for Black identities,

and would later espouse Black pride through collective Black identification. Cross (1999) calls

these buffering organizations that perform the *bonding* function of Black racial identity.

2. Black male identity formation and leadership development as seen through dominant narratives of White privilege

On April 20th 1971, author James Baldwin delivered a speech at a rally for a Black man named

George Jackson who had been imprisoned with a sentence of one year to life for stealing $70.20

from a gas station. Baldwin spoke these words:

> What is happening in this century is for the first time within the history of anyone living
> anywhere, a certain group of people who have always been despised, who were born to
> be shoeshine boys, who were born to be political prisoners, in fact were born to be used,
> have discovered, as it happens in time, what happened to them. And they have begun to
> understand that if they are going to liberate themselves, they have to begin it first of all
> within themselves. No one is going to do it for them. (Baldwin & Kenan, 2010, part 4
> speech 13)

Baldwin's words describe the crisis of the deficit perspective on Black masculinity. This

perspective views Black men as only being born to be a "shoe shine boy," or a "prisoner." It is

important to understand the power of cultural stereotypes on our thinking about others. In the

book, *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?* Beverly Tatum (2003)

describes how cultural stereotypes influence public information about Black men. Tatum writes,

> Most of the information we hear about "others"—people racially, religiously, or
> socioeconomically different from ourselves—does not come as a result of first
> hand experience. The second hand information we do receive has often been
> distorted, shaped by cultural stereotypes, and left incomplete (p. 4)

Scholars like Murray (1993) argue from the dominant narrative deficit perspective that there is empirical evidence that Black "behavior induces the [White] motive of resistance or avoidance" (Murray, 1993; Calmore, 1995). According to Murray (1993), the stereotypes that Blacks are more prone to violence and crime than whites, more likely to live off welfare, and are lazier and less moral than whites are "founded on empirically accurate understandings about contemporary Black behavior compared to contemporary White behavior" (p. 412). In short, Black men are commonly viewed through a narrow binary lens that does not allow flexibility of (Cole, 1996). In this dissertation the aim is to look closely at the lives of HBCU presidents and allow their life stories to inform and teach. The goal is to see how functions of Black identity and Black leadership types help to interpret the life stories of three Black male HBCU presidents. (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999; Myrdal, 1944)

The significance of race plays an integral part in promoting the crisis of deficit perspectives and, the limited literature on the Black male leadership identity formation/development (Franklin, 1969; Hughes & Berry, 2012). There is a long and documented history of the use of race as a social construct to reconcile, the chattel slavery of Blacks and the extermination of American Indians, while espousing the ideals of freedom by White American colonist (Alexander, 2012). As noted in the book *The New Jim Crow* by civil rights attorney, Michelle Alexander, the dehumanization of people of color has historically been taught through books, newspapers, and mass communications. Alexander (2012), provides an historical analysis, which describes how racism was justified, she writes:

> As plantation farming expanded, particularly to tobacco and cotton farming, demand increased greatly for both labor and land. The demand for land was met by invading and conquering larger and larger swaths of territory. American Indians became a growing impediment to White European 'progress', and during this period, the images of American Indians promoted in books, newspapers, and magazines became increasingly negative. As sociologist Keith Kilty and Erick Swank have observed, eliminating

'savages' is less of a moral problem than eliminating human beings, and therefore American Indians came to be understood as a lesser race-uncivilized savages- thus providing a justification for the extermination of the native peoples. The growing demand for labor on plantations was met through Black slavery (p. 23).

This "lesser race" strategy has had lasting impacts on the negative depictions of Indians, Blacks and other people of color. Inspirational and formative life stories on Black male leaders are too often silenced, and the identities of Black college presidents, like the men pictured in the photograph below, have become invisible (Morrow, 203; Ellison, 1952).

Figure 1. Educators in Charge of Land Grant Colleges, 1922.

EDUCATORS IN CHARGE OF LAND GRANT COLLEGES
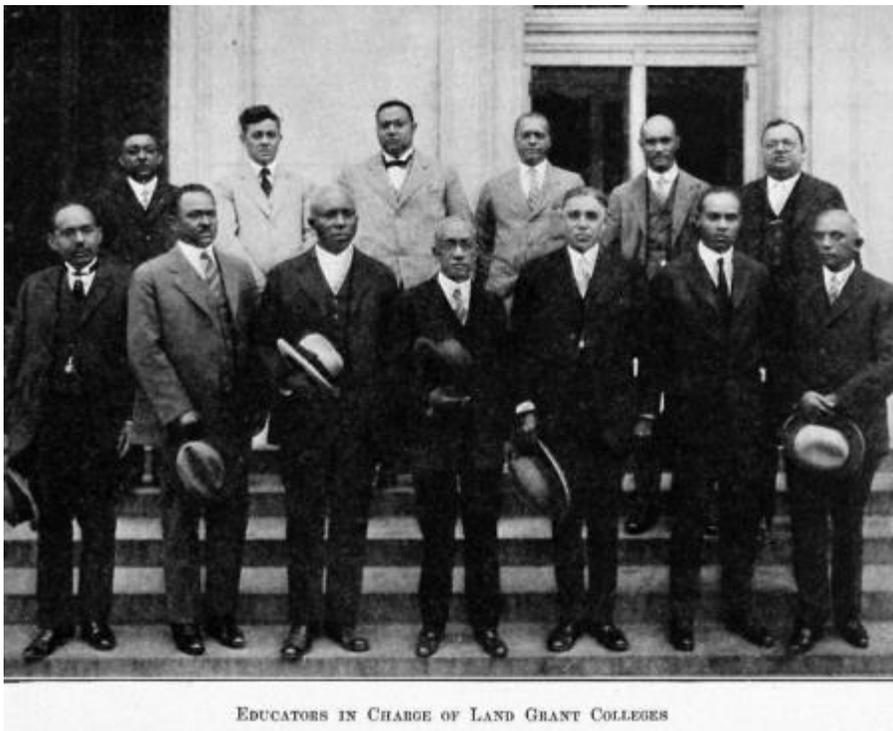
Photo Source: Woodson (1922) *Educators in Charge of Land Grant Colleges. P. 507*

Jenny Gordon (2005) writes about racial discourse as a *code of silence* in her article

"Inadvertent Complicity: Colorblindness in Teacher Education:"

Resistance to opening up the unsettling discourse of race becomes a way for groups to sustain the "culture of niceness" (McIntyre, 1997) while opening up racial discourse is seen by some as a betrayal of the *code of silence* built up over time. Discussions about race are often avoided to protect the pleasant relationships among colleagues at the expense of adopting racially conscious approaches to teaching and learning. (p.149)

In short, talking about race is the first step in engaging deficit models of Black masculinity. Such race-talk is uncomfortable because the U.S. public discourse on race and racism remains drenched with divisive undercurrents of moral authority, historical interpretation, and fear (Gordon, 2005). Thus, it is important to name America's institutional racism, as a problem that disproportionately privileges White students and inequitably weakens the identity and leadership development of Black students (Tatum, 2003; Bell, 1993).

An effective tool of institutional racism and White privilege is the process of espousing the dominant narrative. The dominant narrative is the process of telling, retelling, and teaching of history through dominant points of view which benefit the material and psychological needs of the White dominant group in society (Bell, 1993). Institutional racism also influences the trajectories of White students, but not to the same extent. One example is the relatively lower educational outcomes of White students attending under-resourced majority Black schools in America (Thompson-Dorsey, 2014). While the story of under-resourced predominantly Black American schools is known (Anyon, 1995), less common is literature on the complex narratives of the Black male identity formation of leaders and their life trajectories.

Purpose of the Study

It is with dominant and anti-deficit perspectives in mind that this study will focus on the life stories of African American male HBCU presidents. The purpose of this study is to explain why and how these Black men became long-term HBCU presidents, to speak back to the

aforementioned crisis. This study is intended for readers who have, and who have not, personally met a Black male HBCU President to provide alternatives to any preconceived notions about this population. Ultimately, this research may serve as an example to disrupt the cultural deficit model of Black male leadership in America. It may also serve as an example to disrupt narratives of hegemony, chauvinism, patriarchy, homophobia, meritocracy, essentialism, and other destructive dominant narratives in America.

Significance of the Study

A qualitative life narrative approach is applied in this study toward gathering and analyzing the lived experiences of Black male HBCU presidents. Using a critical analysis of identity and leadership, the hope is that this study will be a resource for future Black male leaders from which to glean lessons and direction. These life stories are significant and provide practical resources for critical educators seeking to use anti-deficit narratives of Black identity as: (1) a bridge to understanding difference, (2) examples to disrupt dominant narratives, and (3) to construct alternative narratives of integrated Black intellectual and leadership identities. In the same way, these narratives may provide relatable and informative stories of Black identity (Tanaka, 2009).

Similarly, significant is that it contributes to closing the gap in research on African American male HBCU presidents due to the lack of entry access, the limited number of Black male researchers with the ability to collect insider narratives, and the relatively small number of potential study participants, considering Black male college presidents make up less than 3.1% of all college presidents in the United States (ACE, 2012). Research indicates that Black-led institutions of higher education have greater success with African American student graduation rates, graduate degree achievement, employment, and life satisfaction (Price, Spriggs, &

Swinton, 2011; College Report, 2012). The significance of this study is that it intends to inform practical education, scholarly research, and higher education administration through an analysis of life lessons on Black male identity formation and leadership development.

Scope of the Study

While the study is not designed to generate findings that are generalizable to all Black male HBCU presidents, it does offer spaces for readers to consider transferable information on why and how Black male HBCU presidents construct leadership identities. Additionally, the study does not speak to the wide variance of the 104 public, private, 4-year, and 2-year HBCUs in the United States, but presents a more in-depth viewpoint of a smaller number of HBCUs. This study also does not speak to the identity formation and self-concepts of international Black people due to its focus upon filling the literature gaps on identity and self-concepts about Black American males. All the participants in the study are African American men, which provides some inherent limitation to its breadth, yet, it also provides room for studying these men in-depth.

Additionally, there is a growing number of Black female HBCU presidents (30%) (Gasman, 2009), which indicates a hopeful change in the patriarchy within HBCUs. These women of color build from the legacy of Black female HBCU presidents like Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, founder of Bethune-Cookman University. There is a need for Black female HBCU leadership narratives to be examined by researchers, who can speak to the complexities of Black female identity and leadership. Despite the limitations, this study is designed to provide an intimate look at elements of Black male racial identity formation and leadership development, within a larger U.S. context of institutional racism. This work will contribute to qualitative

educational research on Black male identity formation and serve as an anti-deficit example of Black male leadership development research.

Positionality Statement

Describing my position as a researcher requires me to do some uncomfortable identity work to unpack my "internalized racism" (Woodson, 1933; Clark and Clark, 1947; Fanon 1965, 1967) and how it may influence my approach to research. Rita Kohli (2014) in her article "Unpacking internalized racism: teachers of color striving for a racially just classroom" operationalizes internalized racism as:

> (1) a phenomenon that, like racism impacts all communities of color, (2) can be triggered by cumulative exposure to racism, and (3) results in the conscious or unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy where the culture, values and beliefs of the dominant culture are prioritized over the cultural values and beliefs of racial minorities. (p. 370)

As Kohli describes, unpacking internalized racism requires me to check my conscious and unconscious acceptance of racial hierarchy and how it may influence my approach to this study. In retrospect I originally began this study four years ago from a quantitative positivist lens where I sought to use data and statistics to argue HBCUs as first-class institutions of higher education in the context of Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). My background as a Black male trained in public administration and technical grant writing situated my research approach to use statistical analysis and compare measurable data including: (a) higher HBCU graduation rates for Black students; (b) higher rates of social, career, and life satisfaction for Black HBCU graduates versus Black PWI graduates; and (c) the greater levels of economic success for Black HBCU graduates in comparison with their Black PWI counterparts (Price, Spriggs, & Swinton, 2011).

My quantitative approach failed in potency for three main reasons. First, this approach created a false binary of "us" verse "them" by using comparisons of Black graduates from HBCUs versus Black graduates from PWIs. This was counter-productive to the goal of pan-Africanist cooperation (Shujaa, 1995). Many of the Black scholars whose work I admire did not attend HBCUs, yet they translate a strong sense of Black pride, intellectualism, and inspiration in their writings. Second, this quantitative approach sought to use the language of racial hierarchy to argue against racial hierarchy, thereby reinscribing inequity. Last, this approach lacked a human touch and I attempted to use metrics to express a deep love for HBCUs, which can only be articulated with words. I find too often in research on Black males numbers are used as descriptors for the Black experience without genuine inquiry into the stories behinds the numbers. In the book *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (Malcom X, 1965), Malcolm provides a narrative discussion on the dehumanization process of the prison industrial complex where humans are relegated to become numbers.

Figure 2. Picture of Malcolm X's Prison Number
from "Public Broadcasting Station (PBS), the American Experience"
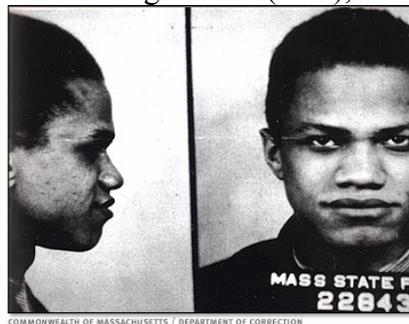
In retrospect I did not want to approach this research through a numbers only perspective that would force the participants into a box or metaphorical prison of limited expression. In contrast my experience as an HBCU student was a lesson in identity emancipation. My HBCU undergraduate experience at Bethune-Cookman University changed my self-concept and Black racial identity. It gave me concrete examples that people of color could responsibly run

institutions, transform communities, and promote positive role models on a large scale. It was inspiring to see Dr. Oswald P. Brunson, Bethune-Cookman's 4th President, responsibly grow the University while honoring its historical significance, and espousing racial pride and collective Black identification.

Unpacking my internalized racism, I realized my K-12 education in an affluent White school system taught me that Black was inferior, invisible, and conveniently missing from my textbooks. The dominant narrative for Black masculinity was a violent thug, a criminal, and an unintelligent invisible student who could only be celebrated as an athlete or entertainer. My HBCU life story identifies with what Charles Price (2009) described as the *encounter experiences* of Black Rastas in Jamaica. Through his analysis of narrative data on encounter experiences he found his interlocutors transformed their views of themselves and their racial group. Price describes this process as "how they turn stigma into an asset…to *fashion a collective identification*" (p. 101, emphasis added).

After a rigorous investigation of the methodological limitations of a strictly quantitative analysis I found that it prevented a better understanding of processes, characteristics, people, context, links, multiple meanings, and cultural practices (Noblit, Flores, & Murillo, 2004). To better understand the questions I had on the functions of Black racial identity development and leadership related to my encounter experience at an HBCU. I needed to assemble the intimate life stories of others who navigated identity in and out of HBCUs.

As a burgeoning researcher and scholar I took coursework in mixed methods, life stories, and advanced qualitative methods. I read more on mixed methods, qualitative research, and narrative inquiry and it expanded my tool set for analysis. I looked at work of Czarniawska (2000), *Narratives in Social Science Research* on the power to transform epistemologies by

offering alternative narratives. Czarniawska writes, "narrative offers an alternative form of knowing" (p. 8). By using the life narrative method my participants could speak through their alternative life stories and offer multiple epistemological realities of Black male identity. Czarniawska (2000) writes, "the power of the story does not depend on its connection to the world outside the story but in its openness for negotiating meaning" (p. 9). Similarly, my aim for this study is to negotiate what it means to be a Black male long-term HBCU President in the United States.

As mentioned, I was greatly influenced by the life stories course taught by Dr. Charles Price. His approach to methods was thorough, detailed, and compelling. After the class I could not stop thinking about the course and the research experiences so I read his book *Becoming Rasta: Origins of Rastafari Identity in Jamaica* (Price, 2009). In his book he referenced the work of Cross's (1995) *Nigresence*. I was familiar with Cross's work from the course but I was more intrigued by how Price incorporated Cross's model to explain the phenomena of Black Jamaicans transforming from racial and religious encounter experiences to form Rasta identities as organizers in the Rasta Federation. For me, Price's work made an important link between Black racial identity and organizations that I had not thought of before. Reflecting on my own experience I conceptualized, that HBCUs were Black cultural organizations, which provided a similar encounter experience for me. This shifted my research foci to Black racial identity and the ways to better understand, HBCUs as Black racial identity shapers within a Eurocentric-American context.

I tested these new qualitative tools through a life story analysis of my former HBCU supervisor Chaplain Dr. Quincy Scott, Jr., who also graduated from and taught at an HBCU. His narrative was interesting, informative, and entertaining. During my late-night transcribing,

coding, and data analysis sessions, I found his stories were captivating and powerful. His stories said what I wanted to say through quantifiable data but with a human touch and creative flare. I recognized the life stories method may do a better job of stemming the neo-conservative momentum against the existence of HBCUs by legislators whose views of HBCUs may be from a distant second- or third-hand perspective. If I could find a way to weave HBCU life stories into an analysis, it could allow legislators to enter into a world of HBCUs interpreted by few researchers. But why did I feel the ultimate solution to "save" HBCUs had to come from White legislators? Unpacking my internalized racism, I found that my initial motivations for the study were fundamentally flawed. My hyper-politicized research agenda was getting in the way of better understanding why and how these men became long-term HBCU presidents.

To come to terms with myself as a researcher I would have to wrestle with and throw off my mental chains of positivist hierarchical academic thought. Doing so, forced me to self-examine positionality, reflexivity, objectivity, and representation (Noblit et al., 2004). By examining my position as an HBCU alumnus, HBCU instructor, and HBCU supporter, I learned how to distance my position from the study. By examining reflexivity, I was in a constant process of "redesigning the observer" (Marcus, 1995, p. 111), challenging my internally racist assumptions and making room for different representations of HBCUs in America that I had not previously embraced.

After deliberating, I decided the best method was life narrative and I would approach my social science inquiry through a critical qualitative lens. But who could join me on this historical inquiry and tell the anti-deficit stories of Black racial identity and Black organizational leadership through a reflective lens? It quickly became clear that HBCU presidents had a perspective of the inner workings of HBCUs that students, staff members, teachers, and alumni

could not express. Using the life narrative method to study Black male HBCUs presidents would

help me to better understand the identity and leadership qualities that helped propel these men to

become long-term HBCU presidents.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW: DEFINITIONS, BLACK IDENTITY

FORMATION, and BLACK LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

What's a continental breakfast? It's a croissant, coffee, and tea- In Europe. That is not a continental breakfast in Japan—they have rice for breakfast. It's not a continental breakfast in Ghana. So the next time somebody ask you if you want a continental breakfast, you ask them, which continent?- HBCU President Lynn (Interview 3 of 3)

Introduction

As HBCU President Lynn describes Europe is not the only continent that eats breakfast in the morning. Yet the dominant understanding for what continental breakfast truly means is the food only eaten in Europe. In essence the power of language attached to the term *continental breakfast* is re-written to mean only what is Eurocentric. Black male authors Ellison (1952) Gates (1996) and West (1996) write that Black identity in Eurocentric American has long been one of invisibleness. Our smooth Black skin, rich culture, and vibrant heritage are often depicted through a Eurocentric lens in schools (Shujaa, 1994; Kunjufu, 2006; Tatum, 2003). Hence, Black racial identity (or self-concept) has been viewed in reaction to the dominant White point of view rather than being the center of perspective (DuBois, 1903). Educational scholar Shujaa (1993, 1994, 2004) argues that imperialist and White hegemonic forces negatively impact the schooling experience and the development of self-concepts for African American students in the United States. He argues that African American students receive a process of *schooling*, which includes harsher penalties and discipline, rather than an *education*, which is designed to uplift students. Shujaa points to Blacks spaces and independent African-centered schools as the solution to dominant class indoctrination. Black males represent 3.1% of all college presidents in America,

and their stories are absent from common representations of Black male life in America (ACE, 2014). Potentially the life stories of HBCU Black male presidents can help to inform perspectives on Black racial identity and Black leadership development in Black spaces.

Over 181 sources inform this study from a variety of fields. The primary organization and analysis of the study is inspired by the Black Racial Identity literature of William Cross (1995), and the Black leadership development literature of Cornel West (1999). These Black male authors helped me to improve the scientific protocols used in Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6 to categorize data, analyze themes, and explain the life lessons I learned from the narrators.

The remaining text of this chapter will offer (a) the definition of terms, (b) a critical review of the literature on Black racial identity formation, Nigresence theory, and identity models, and (c) a critical review of the literature on Black leadership development. For each literature review I conducted a search in articles plus, ERIC, Google scholar, and University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill (UNC) Libraries databases. I reviewed over one-hundred-and-fifteen abstracts and cite fifty-one scholarly studies, articles, or books. These citations where selected to provide a historical understanding and context for the study. Additionally, faculty experts helped to select pertinent literature related to the research argument. Lastly, I created a matrix of selection criteria including: pioneering pieces, critical pieces, and peer reviewed literature. The goal of this chapter is to provide evidence from the concepts and theories of previous literature on Black identity development and Black leadership development to spark further conceptualizing and theorizing about why and how Black males become long-term HBCU presidents. These narratives, support the well-documented institutional racism and related marginalization experienced by the vast majority of U. S. Black males (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Alexander, 2011; Hughes and Berry, 2012). This chapter concludes with a

synopsis of the problem, and its relation to the literature as underpinnings to the central research question: why and how Black males become long-term HBCU presidents?

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Definition of Terms

</div>

The following definitions of terms have been adopted from a variety of scholars in the fields of Black racial identity and education (Cross, 1995; Price, 2009; Bell, 1993; Delgado & Stefanic, 2012; Shujaa, 1994; Madhubuti, 1990; Calmore, 1995; Powell, 2007). These terms will serve as a basis of reference throughout the remaining text of this dissertation.

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Table 2: Definition of Terms

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Term	Definition
Deficit Model	A perspective that blames the victims of institutional oppression (often students of color) for their own victimization by referring to negative stereotypes and assumptions regarding certain groups or communities (Irizarry, 2009).
Structural Racism	The concept that racism operates through institutions and societal structures (Calmore, 1995; Powell, 2007).
Dominant Narrative or Master Narrative	The story often projected by the dominant culture, which benefits the material and psychological needs of the dominant group in society (Bell, 1993).
Identity	Storehouses of information on which a person draws to navigate their lives; elements of the human capacity to reflect and be self-and other-aware. (Price, 2009, p. 101).
Nigresence	Describes a process of transforming a negative self-concept of Blackness into a positive self-concept. (Cross, 1971).
Functions of Black Identity	The ways in which Black identity operates or functions in one's daily life" (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999 p.31).
White Supremacy or Racism	A system "where Black men are the major threat to White male rule"(Madhubuti, 1990, p. 190).
Miseducation	Information picked up from inaccurate school texts, television news coverage that overreport Black crime, and historically distorted presentations at museums, and the like, it is fairly easy for many Black children to begin to accept as fact information about Black people that is both negative and misleading (Cross and Fhagen-Smith, 2012 p.253)
Centricity	Centricity is a concept that can be applied to any culture. The centrist paradigm is supported by research showing that the most productive method of teaching any student is to place his or her group within the center of the context of knowledge. (Asante, 1990).
A Black Leader	A Black leader as a socially conscious *mapmaker*, who assists people in fashioning their own maps to navigate identity, emotions, and decisions within an oppressive society (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970; Tryman, 1977; West, 1999).
Black Leadership	The educational process of studying the historical relationships between

| Development | Black leaders and the Black community. A vibrant tradition of resistance passed on to new generations in order to nurture a "collective critical consciousness" (West 1999, p. 57). |

Black Racial Identity Theory

Anthropologist Charles Price describes identities as "storehouses of information that persons draw on to navigate their lives, elements of the human capacity to reflect and be self and other-aware" (2009, p. 101). Similarly, Tatum (2003) describes identity as a complex tripartite discovery of self, group, and the world's view of one's conceptual self. In her view, the search for self involves asking the following questions:

> Who am I? The answer depends in large part on who the world around me says I am. Who do my parents say I am? Who do my peers say I am? What message is reflected back to me in the faces and voices of my teachers, my neighbors, store clerks? What do I learn from media about myself? How am I represented in the cultural images around me? Or am I missing from the picture all together? (p. 18)

These internal questions described here by Tatum are conceptualized and continually renewed through the fluid process of identity formation. Social scientists examine this process through racial identity theory. Helms (1990) described racial identity as the examination of the extent to which people of color perceive themselves to share a common racial heritage with their racial group.

Both Tatum (1992; 2003) and Helms (1990) present a theoretical view of identity that is negotiated on the three levels of self, ascribed group, and the external world. Psychologist Erickson (1968) writes, "identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning" (p. 22). West (1996) presents a three-level depiction of the search for Black identity as an act of active resistance to the White supremacist imposition of subordinate roles, stations, and identities, he writes:

> [Black people are] attempting to devise some set of existential strategies against the overwhelming onslaught of White dehumanization, devaluation, and

degradation. The search for Black space (home), Black place (roots), and Black face (name) is a flight from the visceral effects of White supremacy (p. 88).

West describes this 'flight from White supremacy' as occurring on three levels of the Black psyche at once. Similarly, Tatum describes this triad of identity formation on the levels of: (1) personal identity, (2) reference group identity, and (3) external world[1] identity as depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Triad of Black Self-Concept Map
(Informed by West, 1996 and Tatum 2003)

Self- Concept Consist of:

3. External World Identity

2. Reference Group Orientation

1. Personal Identity
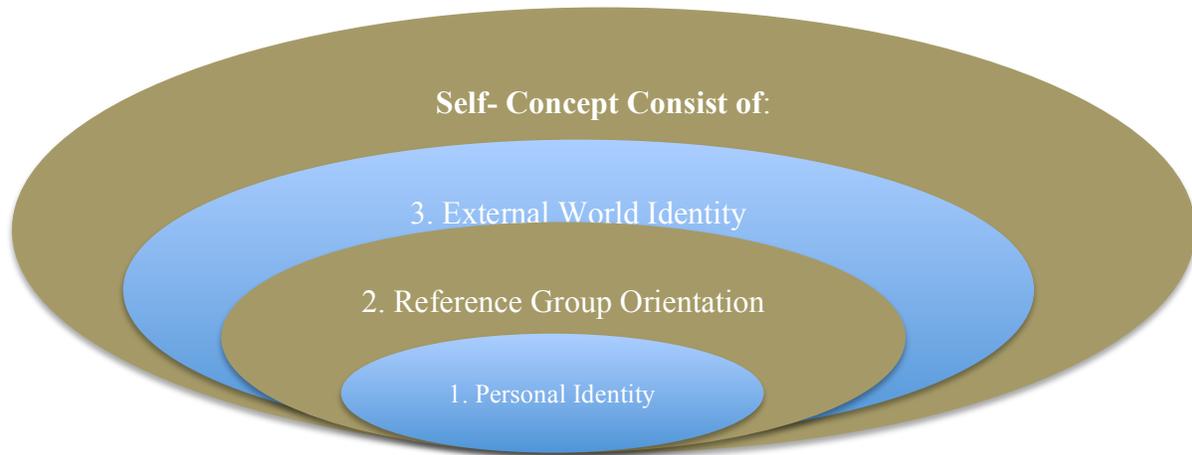
Because external world identity is salient for the formation of Black racial identity in American educational organizations, it is also important to examine the external world's dominant narratives, which benefit the material and psychological needs of the dominant group in society (Bell, 1993). This study presents a functional analysis of how Black male HBCU presidents navigate racism in America.

First, it is imperative to further examine the historical roots of Black racial identity theory. For African Americans, the discourse of identity starts with the work of W.E.B. DuBois

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[1] **External World** is the environmental messaging best described by Tatum (2003) where she writes the "messages reflected back to me in the faces and voices of my teachers, my neighbors, store clerks" (p.18). For Black male students this represents the Eurocentric "messages" reflected in the schooling process (Shujaa, 19995).

(1903) in the *Souls of Black Folk*. In this book, DuBois introduced the concept of double-consciousness: a double identity for Black people in which their identities are objectified as a racial object/target while simultaneously possessing a sense of self as a cultural being (Rice, 2004). Although, DuBois's work was transformational for his time, it did not create an empirical model of analysis to look at the development of Black identity over time. This type of identity modeling began with the work of psychologists Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1966), who presented hierarchal and universal identity models in the late 1960s.

Foundational Identity Models

Erikson wanted to map how humans enter young adulthood and form a social identity. His work described eight stages of personality development:

1. Trust *versus* mistrust
2. Autonomy *versus* shame and doubt
3. Initiative *versus* guilt
4. Industry *versus* inferiority
5. Identity *versus* identity confusion
6. Intimacy *versus* isolation
7. Generativity *versus* stagnation
8. Integrity *versus* despair

As seen here the "*versus*" presentation of life stages is consistent with Erikson's (1968) notion that each stage was a crisis that required resolution in relation to the next identity challenge. This concept of humanity struggling through identity development is also captured in the later models of Black identity formation developed by Cross (1971), and Jackson (1976). Cross (2008) describes Erikson's initial work as containing the following five characteristics, which contribute to the study of adolescent identity formation:

1. Originating in the mind's eye of one's significant others
2. Transmitted through socialization experiences orchestrated by significant others
3. Emerges with somewhat firm identity boundaries during middle-childhood and pre-adolescence
4. Becomes the object of intense reflection and interrogation during adolescence

5.   By late adolescence and early adulthood culminates in achieved and internalized identity (p. 157).

Here, it is evident that Erikson's findings describe how external factors of "significant others" (i.e. family and teachers) can impact how one internalizes their own self-concept. Cross & Cross (2008) critique Erikson's work as examining identity within a Eurocentric context, but attribute Erikson as being the first to identify a way to "cope with social categorization and social stigmatization" (p. 158). Erikson's work was later augmented by Marcia's (1966) development of four identity statuses: *diffusion* (a status of identity confusion), f*oreclosed* (an uncritical premature acceptance of identity), *moratorium* (a state of flux where identity is constantly tested), and *achieved* (a status of resolution authentication and self-ownership).

Marcia (1966) interviewed eighty-six predominately White males enrolled in psychology, religion, and history courses at Hiram College (a predominately White institution). Marcia's findings were impactful but cannot be generalized to non-White populations because the sample was homogenous. Additionally, the culturally bias assumptions of the study contrast with what research finds relevant in Black community. For example, a question from the study was "Q: Have you ever had any doubts about your religious beliefs?" Marcia's interpretation protocol for *Identity Achievement* [4 out 4 on the hierarchal scale] was described as, "Yeah, I have even started to wonder whether or not there was a God." Additionally, in Marcia's interpretation protocol for *Foreclosed Identity* [2 out of 4 on the hierarchal scale], the answer was described as "No, not really, our family is pretty much in agreement on these things" (p. 553). In Marcia's study students who retained a familial faith were interpreted as being in the *Foreclosed Identity* status [2 on the scale of 4], while students who abandoned a familial belief in God had *Achieved Identity* status [4 on scale of 4]. These interpretations, though they may have been appropriate for

White-Anglo-positivists in the 1960s, sharply contrast with the Black American culture of the same era, who largely incorporated faith as central to Black identity formation (Dantly, 2005; Gates & West, 1996).

Black psychologist, Charles Thomas (1971), provided insight on the effects of racism on the mental states of many Black men in America and describes prescriptive solutions by advocating a deep immersion into the study of Black history. In this work, he describes the African American deficit mindset can be healed with African-centered education or "Blackness as a tonic" (p. 103). Thomas writes:

> Need for White approval is the most pathological factor in the denial of human fulfillment by Afro-Americans. Inherent in this concept of approval is the need to be accepted as something other than what one is. Gratification is based upon a denial of self and a rejection of group goals and activities. The driving force behind this need requires Afro-Americans to seek approval in all activities, to use White expectations as the yardstick to determine what is good, desirable, or necessary. The pattern of behavior is one where individuals are complying, subservient, and on bended knees. This of course is the posture of the "Uncle Tom." The real tragedy however is the inability to express hostility directly toward the oppressor. (p. 105)

Although Thomas wrote this piece within a more an overtly racist 1970s American culture, his insights relate to certain aspect of contemporary race and identity issues. To expound on his description of the "Uncle Tom posture", Thomas (1971) uses the term *CRISIS of identity* meaning:

> C- *Carelessness,* an avoidance of opportunities to affirm Blackness
> R- *Retrogression*, begins with a Black mindset but after a while changes to a more White frame of thought, as before the awareness
> I- *Insecurity,* less than confident, frequently saying "we ain't ready yet"
> S- *Stress,* attempting to cope, a "part-time Black," who is non-Black with whites to minimize anxiety
> I- *Inferiority*, difficulty in making realistic social comparison with the primary racial group
> S- *Self-dislike*, inability to find a productive life or to find a role equal to one's talent (p. 107)

The tonic Thomas (1971) prescribes to heal the Uncle Tom mindset is *Blackness* through the critical, communal, and existential understanding of Black history. He writes, "it is for this reason Black studies must be the core of any intervention used in the name of mental health" (p. 108). Understanding Black history provides the cultural backdrop for individuals to enact positive functions of Black identity. This concept may also be seen through a contemporary lens as an anti-deficit historical Black life narratives speaking back to the dominant historical narrative of White privilege.

Thomas' Uncle Tom mind state relates to the first of a five-stage process in Cross's (1971) article "The Negro-to-Black Conversion Experience." Here Cross examines his own biographical experiences to describe a five-stage Black identity development model. This construct was later revised (Cross, 1978; 1995) to add to the model the terms "statuses" or "clusters" to show that Black people could move back and forth throughout the model's stages (Jackson, 1976). Cross's work describes a process of transforming a negative self-concept of Blackness into one that is positive. In the preparation for this study, I was afforded the opportunity to discuss Cross's modeling with Black educational psychologist Dr. DeCuir-Gunby at NC State University. In DeCuir-Gunby's (2009) article *A Review of Racial Identity Development of African American Adolescents: The Role of Education*, she surmises that Cross's five-stage *Nigresence* model includes:

1. Pre-encounter (pro-White/anti-Black point of view)
2. Encounter (questioning of pro-White/anti-Black self-image perspective)
3. Immersion-Emersion (embracing Blackness)
4. Internalization (racial understanding)
5. Internalization-Commitment (Commitment to Black identity and racial understanding)

Cross would later operationalize Black identity as five daily functions: (1) the *bridging* function, (2) the *individualism* function, (3) the *buffering* function, (4) the *bonding* function, (5) the *code-switching* function (Cross, 2012; Cross, et al 1999).

Nigresence Functions of Black Identity

A better grasp of the Black identity functions can inform leadership in the context of HBCUs. Black people are diverse, and each individual navigates life specific to their understanding of self-concept. Over four decades of research on Black racial identity reveals:

> [A] broad range of identities to be found among African Americans…the identity of any particular Black person lays claim to multiple identity reference points…for example a Black person who is lesbian, bi-racial and disabled or a German born Black male who now lives in Chicago, believes in an East Indian concept of God. (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999 p.29)

With this broad range of multiple identity references it is important in my research to present the data in a way that maintains each narrator's identity reference points (Emerson et al, 2011). Here I present interview data findings on the life stories recalled by President Thomas. Qualitative researcher Creswell (2012) writes one focus of life narrative could be, specific pivotal events, in the context of the person's life trajectory. I utilize these pivotal life stories to better understand facets of identity and how President Thomas used Black identity as a tool to operate in an oppressive racist environment.

Many scholarly discussions on Black identity are found in the field of Black psychology. Some researchers seek an empirical diagnosis of psychological and social health or dysfunction (Akbar, 1995; Early, 1993; Massey & Denton, 1993; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1994). As an educational researcher I approach the data looking to utilize the theories, concepts, and terminology found in the field of Black psychology as a sensitizing lens to inform the understanding of educational leaders, specifically Black male HBCU presidents. Instead of

looking to diagnose or evaluate, I seek to better understand the whys (motivations), and how (processes or stories) of successful Black male higher education administrators.

In looking over the data and spending countless hours comparing narrative data with literature and theoretical constructs, I identified how four major functions of Black identity manifest in the lives of Black presidents (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999) who found five functions of Black identity. These functions may also be seen as leadership tools-in-action. Cross (1999), describes these functions of identity as, "ways in which Black identity operates or functions in one's daily life" (p.31).

The four common themes of functional Black identity found in the President's life stories are: bridging, individualism, buffering, and bonding. The one function of Black racial identity found in Cross' (1999) research that I identified as not salient in the narrators' data was the function of *code-switching* (or fronting), which research states may be used to accommodate the norms of the dominate group. In Codeswitching situations African Americans change the way they "act, think, dress and express" (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999 p. 32). The article "African American identity development across the life span: Educational implications," by Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999) operationalize the following five functions of Black identity:

1. **Buffering**, "ideas and attitudes that create psychological protection from everyday racism. An ability to filter out racist information, and to let nonracist experiences, relationships, transactions and opportunities flow through. Optimally, buffering prepares one for racist encounters, leading to greater personal control; however if applied too heavy-handedly, it may limit opportunities for growth and development" (p.31).

Organizations such as the NAACP and Black student organizations, also provide a buffering function.

2. **Bonding**, the degree to which the person derives meaning and support from an affiliation with or attachment to Black people and Black culture. (p.31) This construct relates to the collective group identification found in the research fields of anthropology, political science, and Black studies (Price, 2009; Tryman 1978; West, 1999). Organizations such as HBCUS and Black fraternities and sororities also provide a bonding function.

3. **Bridging**, "those competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that make it possible for a Black person to immerse himself or herself in another group's experience, absent of a need to suppress one's sense of Blackness. The person moves back and forth between Black culture and the ways of knowing, acting, thinking and feeling that constitute a non-Black worldview. Part of the joy associated with this exchange is derived from being able to immerse oneself in the other person's social construction of reality, while never losing site of one's point of departure" (p.32).

4. **Code switching,** is bicultural or bilingual competence, the ability to perform various cultural responses according to context. (Clark et al, 1995). Cross-writes, "to temporarily accommodate the norms and regulations of a group organization, school, or workplace. To act, think, dress, and express in ways that maximize the comfort level of the group. *Code-switching* (or fronting) may occur when an organization or group shows signs of discomfort with explicit expressions of difference, especially race (p.32)".

5. **Individualism**[2], the expression of one's unique personality…. a race-neutral fashion in accord with the whims and dictates of the unique aspects of one's self-concept. (p.33).

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[2] The enactment of *individualism* relates to the unique leadership self-concept of the narrators. The presidents did not see themselves as solely leaders of Black people but had self-concepts of themselves as

In Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6, I will utilize four of these five functions that were identified and triangulated in the meta-narratives of this study.

Another pioneer in Black identity work is Black psychologist Bailey Jackson (1976) who presents an alternative five-stage model for Black identity development. Jackson's stages (see Figure 4) are (1) *Naïve*, the absence of social consciousness; (2) *Acceptance*, suggesting of the prevailing White majority description and perceived worth of Black people, Black culture, or experience; (3) *Resistance*, the rejection of the prevailing majority culture's definition and valuing of Black people and culture; (4) *Redefinition,* the renaming, reaffirming, and reclaiming of one's sense of Blackness, Black culture, and racial identity; and (5) *Internalization,* the integration of a refined racial identity into acceptance of one's self-concept or identity.

Figure 4. Five Stages of Jackson's Black Identity Development Model
(Wijeyesinghe & Jackson, 2001, p. 15).
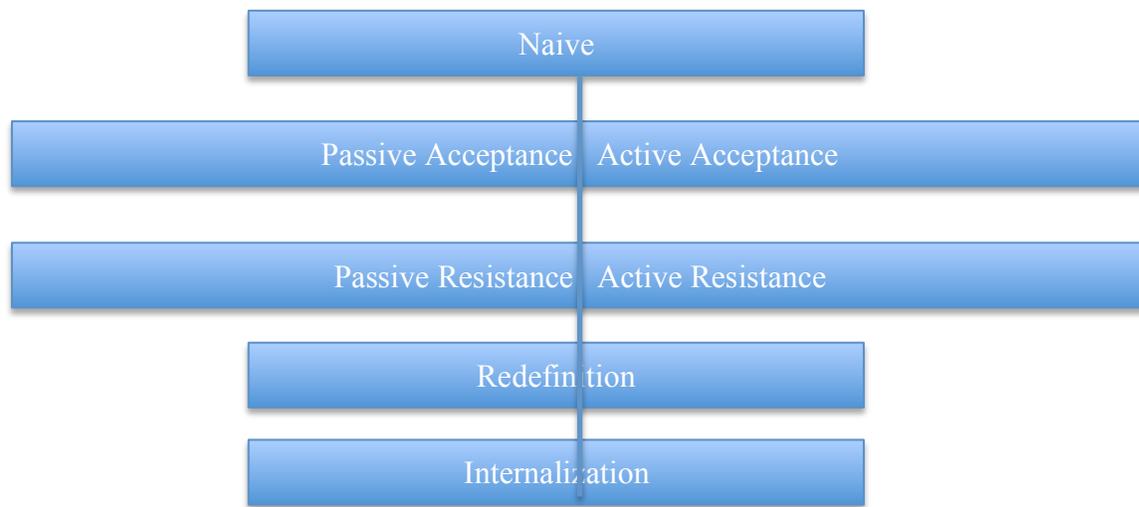
The Cross (1971) and Jackson (1978) models provide scholarly insight into the process of identity development for African Americans. However, more importantly they take part in the

Black men. The HBCU president data spoke to Blackness as an asset that make's one unique. Thus the data did not align directly with Cross' (1999) construct of *individualism* as a race-neutral identity function. This withstanding, the function of individualism helps to better understand how these men formed *unique leadership identities as youths* and maintained these identities through adulthood.

"renaming and reclaiming" process of unpacking identity, to create a unique language to better understand Black racial identity. Fanon (1967) describes this process:

> To speak means to be in a position to use certain syntax to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture to support the weight of a civilization…a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language. Masters of language afford remarkable power (p. 18).

Illuminating Black Identity Literature

The concerns expressed in the critiques of Erikson and Marcia's Eurocentric identity models led to Phinney's work (1989; 1990; 1993), which operationalized Marcia's model for people of color (Black, Jamaican, Asian, East Indian, Chinese, etc.). Phinney's work used Marcia's model with variations for ethnicity such as: (1) ethnic-diffusion, (2) ethnic-foreclosed, (3) ethnic-moratorium, and (4) ethnic-achieved.

Another important extension of Cross's analysis of Black racial identity, is the work of Black Anthropologist Charles Price (2009), who presented an ethnographic identity analysis of Black Jamaicans. Price uses the language of Cross' (1995) "encounter experience" and likens it to the religious concept of the "turning point" when describing the social and cultural experiences of his participants. Price, found that these "encounter experiences" of morally configured Blackness pushed his participants into positive identifications of Blackness by becoming Rasta. Thus, these encounter experiences were not experiences of isolation, solitude, and retrenchment but starting points toward a collective understanding of Blackness through Rasta communities and ultimately the Rasta Federation. Price (2009) recounts:

> Thus, we want to know how people like the Rastafari come to place Blackness and religion at the center of their self-concept, how they turn stigma into an asset, and how these acts relate to fashioning a *collective identification* called Rastafari people (p. 101 emphasis added).

It is this understanding of *collective identification* that makes Price's (2009) research integral to exploring how HBCU presidents work to model and fashion a positive collective HBCU identity. This collective identity becomes a cultural leadership tool for HBCU presidents to create and maintain culturally rich spaces that re-produce positive Black educational identities for students of color who prior to their collective HBCU identification, may have been dis-engaged in White educational spaces (Calmore, 1995).

Both Phinney and Price added layers of *ethnic* and *collective* understanding to the complexities of Black racial identity formation. The literature on Black racial identity provides a backdrop to understanding the self-concepts of the participants in this study. Similarly, literature on Black leadership will help to shape the ways in which this study examines how Black male HBCU presidents approach leadership in the United States. The following review of literature discusses how navigating racial identity becomes integral in the development of Black leadership in the United States.

In the following review of Black leadership, I will (a) contextualize Black leadership within an historical U.S. environment of structural racism, (b) define the term in relation to this study (c) explain the Afrocentric approach to Black leadership and (d) review scholarly research on Black leadership typologies to serve as theoretical underpinnings for understanding the leadership practices of the three Black male HBCU presidents, in this study.

The Context: Black Leadership Development in Response to Racism

In America the legacy of Black leadership has been born under the oppressive forces of chattel slavery, second-class citizenship, miseducation, Jim Crow, segregation, poverty, and police abuse of authority (Cross and Fhagen-Smith, 2012; Woodson, 1933; Myrdal, 1944; Alexander, 2012). These intense forces of external racist pressure coupled with the internal

battles of identity and deficit education may reinforce generational cycles of; low self esteem, low sense of self-worth, and self-destructive behaviors (Akbar, 1995). For many Black people faith is central to Black racial identity and Black people draw inspiration from religious texts to interpret life (Dantly, 2005, Gates and West, 1996). Similar, to the heat of racism in America, the Bible describes people as silver and gold, not for their material wealth, but for their perseverance under fire. The Bible reads,

> And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It *is* my people: and they shall say, The Lord *is* my God. (Holy Bible Zechariah 13:9)

To better understand the *fire* with which Black leaders were and still are refined in America we will examine the narrative voices of the oppressor, which set the scene for the persistent heat of racism in America (Bell, 1993). Here we will review some of these, often but not always White, narratives of oppression to include: (a) segregation (Carter 2000; Klaman, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Thompson-Dorsey, 2013), and (b) White political opposition (Nelson, 1990; Keller, 1978; Carter, 2000; King, 1963). Then I will discuss the context of Historically Black Colleges.

Context: The Influence of Segregation on Black Male Self-Concepts

At the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill the nation's first public University, historians study segregation in higher education and the philosophy of racial hierarchy, which places Anglo-Saxons (or whites) at the top. On June 2nd, 1913, UNC Alumnus Julian Shakespeare Carr dedicated the University of North Carolina's confederate monument "Silent Sam" (See Figure 5). The Silent Sam monument embodies the confederacy, racial hierarchy, and segregation. Growing up as a Black male in Chapel Hill I see the Silent Sam monument as a symbol of segregation historically embedded in higher education.

Figure 5. The Unveiling of Confederate Monument, Chapel Hill, 1913
(Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, Chapel Hill, NC)

An archival review from the Southern Historical Collection at Wilson Library finds Carr's

dedication speech. An excerpt from Carr's speech reads:

> The present generation, I am persuaded scarcely takes notes of what the confederate
> soldier meant to the Anglo-Saxon [White] race during the four years immediately
> succeeding the war, when the facts are that their courage and steadfastness saved the very
> life of the Anglo-Saxon race in the South. Praise God. I trust I may be pardoned for one
> allusion, howbeit rather personal. One hundred yards, from where we stand less than
> ninety days perhaps after my return from Appomattox, I horse whipped a Negro [Black]
> wench until her skirts hung in shreds, because upon the streets of this quiet village she
> had publicly insulted and maligned a Southern Lady and rushed for protection to these
> University buildings where was stationed a garrison of 100 Federal Soldiers. I performed
> the pleasing duty in the immediate presence of the entire garrison. (Carr, 1913 pages. 9A-
> 9B-9C)

Here Carr states the confederate views of Anglo-Saxon racial hierarchy and the lack of regard for

Black lives. Carr's speech states "a Negro wench… rushed for protection to these University

building", then Carr expounds on how this Black woman found no protection from the

University, and no protection from the 100 Federal Soldiers who witnessed what Carr describes

as "the pleasing duty" of brutally horse whipping a Black woman who is accused of, insulting a White woman. Though the current UNC-Chapel Hill administration has made progressive strides to correct some historical ties to racism by renaming buildings erected to honor former Klu Klux Klan leaders, the academy in general still has, as Darrell Cleveland says, "a long way to go" (Cleveland, 2004).

Similarly contemporary higher education scholars find that Black faculty and students encounter: racial entrenchment (Cleveland, 2004; Thompson-Dorsey & Chambers, 2014), financial risk (Sibby Anderson-Thompkins, 2009), racial battle fatigue (William Smith 2004, 2009, 2011), micro-aggressions (Solorzano, et al 2000), and emotional stress (Harlow, 2003). For example, in Hughes' (2004) *article Beyond the Silenced Dialogue: What we tell ourselves when the White academy ain't hearing us*, he describes liberal predominately White institutions as "environments that perpetuate the systematic silencing of African American graduate students" (p.58). Similar to Carr's speech over a century ago, today's predominately White institutions of higher education are not educational sanctuaries for the cultivation of critically conscious Black *mapmakers*. Additionally, research finds K-12 schools are more segregated today than they were before the 1954 *Brown V. Board* decision on school desegregation (Dorsey, 2013). The schools where most Black children are educated often have larger class sizes, fewer teachers, and less advanced course offerings (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Like colleges and K-12 schools the American political environment is a heated racist spaces in regards to the development of Black leaders.

Context: Black Male Leadership and White Political Opposition

On the heels of physical and mental slavery came the Jim Crow era which made legal segregation and second-class citizenship the norm for Blacks in the South (Alexander, 2012). At

the precipice of the segregationist last legal gasp came the words of the popularly elected

Governor of Alabama George Wallace, who Martin Luther King, Jr. described as a "vicious

racist…with his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification" (King, August

28, 1963 *I have a Dream Speech*). It was George Wallace who on January 14th 1963 captured the

emotions of White segregationist while delivering his inaugural address as governor of the state

of Alabama. Wallace filled with indignation and southern Anglo-Saxon pride said:

> In the name of the greatest people who have ever trod this earth [White people], I draw
> the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation
> now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever! (Carter, 2000)

In Wallace's speech, you can hear the narrative of White political opposition as he says "I draw a

line in the dust." Wallace's line in the dust represents the real political opposition Blacks face in

America. In the historical line of the Black codes, laws designed to repress the Black vote in the

South, contemporary methods such as voter identification laws have been enacted to deter and

repress Black and Brown voters (Myrdal, 1944; Alexander, 2012). Black political leaders face

political opposition before they even run for public office. Traditionally, most Black elected

officials had to be preachers or entrepreneurs, such as funeral home directors, who could earn an

income independent of the White power structure. This was due to the common practice of

threatening Black politicians of losing their jobs and livelihoods if they ran for office. Dr. Robert

Drakeford, former Black Mayor of Carrboro, North Carolina recalls his White opposition

aggressively targeting nursing homes to increase voter turnout in an attempt "to prevent a Black

man from getting elected" (Dr. Robert Drakeford, personal communication, August 2, 2015).

Keller's (1978) case study "The Impact of Black Mayors on Urban policy," reviewed the policies

of six Black mayors and the White political opposition they encountered. Keller writes the,

"parasitic White suburbs and the outmigration of White wealth from the central city," blocked

Black mayors from making meaningful urban renewal policy (Keller, 1978 p.50). In Nelson's

(1990) article, *Black mayoral leadership: A twenty year perspective* he found that the major

impediment to Black political leadership was the White political environment. Nelson writes:

> The environmental settings in which Black mayors function also deeply constrain their
> capacity to solve many pressing issues that impact on the lives of their Black
> constituents. (Nelson, 1990 p. 191)

It is under this intense fire of oppression which Black American leadership has been developed

and shaped to glimmer and shine like gold. It is in this larger context of Black leadership

responding to the dominant white culture in which I examine Black male HBCU presidents. To

add more context to the discussion I look at HBCUs within the historical context of working with

less financial resources.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The Higher Education Act of 1965 defines a "historically" black institution of higher

education as "any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964,

whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans." Most Historically

Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), like Bethune-Cookman University in Florida,

Tuskegee University, in Alabama and Shaw University in North Carolina originated in the south

and border-states after the Civil War during and after Reconstruction (1865–1890). Many

HBCUs were started by White northern missionaries and Black church denominations such as

the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African American Episcopal Zion Church and the

American Baptist Home Mission Society (Rovaris 2005; Albritton, 2012). These schools were

also aided in the early years by the Freedmen's Bureau. Tyack and Lowe (1986) write,

> after the war blacks engaged in a collective movement to educate themselves, seeking
> help where they could find it- from the Freedman's Bureau, from Northern philanthropic
> agencies, and from other white groups- but at first relying mostly on their own efforts. (p

.238)

In later years HBCUs also received funding from White philanthropic foundations such as

Nelson Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Julius Rosenwald, and others (Avery, 2009). Many

HBCU administrations were historically white. Jencks & Riesman (1967) write,

> The private Negro colleges for the most part were financed by white philanthropist,
> controlled by white boards of trustees, initially administered by white presidents, and
> largely staffed by white faculty. In due course, the administration and faculty usually
> became predominately Negro, but by then a psychological and cultural pattern had been
> established which was hard to break. (p.15)

Most public HBCUs, except federally funded Howard University, were started after passage of

the Second Morrill Act in 1890, which stipulated Federal funds for land grant colleges (Avery,

2009). Today HBCUs make up 3% of all colleges in the United States yet graduate 28% of all

the African American graduates (College Board, 2012). Additionally, 75% of African American

Ph.Ds received their undergraduate degrees from HBCUs (Willie, Grady, & Hope, 1991). Public

Historically Black Colleges and Universities enroll nearly 80 percent of all students attending

HBCUs and these institutions produce the largest share of professionals in the fields of

engineering, business, mathematics, computer sciences, environmental sciences, nursing,

teaching, and journalism (Fort, 2014). A quantitative economic study using data from the

National Survey of Black Americans found HBCU graduates outperformed non-HBCUs

graduates on direct labor market outcomes, and self confidence (Price, Spriggs, & Swinton,

2011). Though HBCUs produce extraordinary results for many of their Black graduates, the

history of HBCUs gives context to the fiscal challenges HBCU presidents encounter.

The holistic nature of HBCUs as institutions teaches standard White curriculums while

concurrently serving Black communities, re-educating Blacks on identity, and serving as a place

where Blacks could heal from the scars of racism and find respite amidst White oppression (Halasa, 1989). Richard writes,

> Since their inception HBCUS have assumed a dual responsibility with regard to positioning and preparing their students for success. Black colleges must meet the same curriculum standards as predominately White institutions, while simultaneously offering African Americans an education that is culturally relevant. Benjamin E. Mays (1978) advised 'They must be as much concerned with Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Marlowe, as white colleges. But the Negro institution must give equal emphasis to the writings of Paul Dunbar, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes.' (Ricard, 2008 p.28)

HBCUs were founded, for the most part, as a result of racism (Nichols, 2004). Evans, Evans & Evans (2002) argue, "HBCUs were not designed to succeed, rather they were established to appease Black people or to serve as "holding institutions" so that Black students would not matriculate in historically white colleges and universities (HWCUs)" (p. 3).

Many HBCU students have lower incomes then predominately white institutions (PWIs), and thusly are more dependent on Pell grants and Federal financial aid (Rust, 2009). The National Association of State Colleges and Land Grant Universities Office for the Advancement of Public Black Colleges (now Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities) study found that for every federal dollar received by a public Black college the home state allocates only 50 cents (Jones, 2004). The funding disparity is even greater when looking at federal funds. Since Blacks began to emerge as leaders of HBCUs, there has been a public concern about their fiscal management that has often been prevalent in the media (Gasman, 2013; Gasman & Jennings, 2006; Gasman & Anderson-Thompkins, 2003; Gasman & Drezner, 2008; Drezner & Gupta 2012; Jones, 2004; Kujovich, 1994; Minor, 2008). These deficit model myths are reinforced by media reports and lead to inequitable narratives of HBCUs president scandals when compared with similar PWIs. A study of the Chronicle of Higher Education revealed the following inequity in public narratives:

Jones (2004) found in his review of 25 *Chronicle of Higher Education* reports of public scandals at colleges and universities that a double standard emerged. When HBCUs were involved in a scandal or fiscal mismanagement, Jones discovered both the media and state legislators called for their closure or merger nearly every time. However, calls for closure were never suggested by the media or policymakers when similar occurrences involved a PWI. Similarly, Johnson (1993) noted that 'most predominantly White institutions were not faced with the burden of justifying their existence as educational institutions' as HBCUs are continually required to do. (Drezner & Gupta 2012 p.108)

HBCUs have traditionally had the challenge of working with less financial resources than White institutions (Cohen, 2008; Tindall, 2009; Jencks & Riesman, 1967). For example, Glanton (2002) notes on average, for each dollar a PWI receives from the federal government, states distribute between $5 and $7 to the institution. There is a measurable difference in the allocation of state funds to HBCUs. Though the literature overwhelmingly proves that HBCUs have historically produced better outcomes for African American graduates, they have historically operated with less financial resources (Cohen, 2008). This is the challenging economic environment HBCU presidents must navigate. For HBCUs to continue outperforming PWIs in regards to Black graduates it requires strong leadership. To explore the complexities within the unique context of Black leadership in America, I will now review multiple perspectives of leadership.

Black Leadership

The term *leadership* is defined in a myriad of ways in academic, political, and social settings. Here I use three classic definitions of leadership to inform a nuanced look at Black leadership. Political scientist Donald Tryman's (1977) study, *A Typology of Black leadership,* defines leadership as a synonym to *authority*, meaning, "a quality of communication that possesses the potential of reasoned elaboration" (p.19). In the article *Decisions and Non-Decisions,* authors Bachrach and Baratz (1970) describe leadership as a "relational negotiation of conflicting values

in the mind of the recipient in the power relation" (p.633). They elaborate, "power is *relational*

as opposed to possessive or substantive" (p.633 emphasis added). Cornel West adds realism to

this concept of leadership in his 1999 book *Race Matters*. West writes, "a leader requires

personal integrity and political savvy, moral vision and prudential judgment, courageous

defiance, and organizational patience" (West, 1999 p. 61). West argues that Black leadership

development is a result of intentional training and culturally relevant education. West writes:

> Quality leadership is neither the product of one great individual nor the result of odd
> historical accidents. Rather, it comes from deeply bred traditions and communities that
> shape and mold talented and gifted persons. Without a vibrant tradition of resistance
> passed on to new generations, there can be no nurturing of a collective and critical
> consciousness -- only professional conscientiousness survives. (West, 1999 p.57)

Together, Tryman's (1977) articulation of leadership as a *reasoned* decision by the masses,

Bachrach's and Baratz's (1970) understanding of the *relational nature* of leadership, and Cornel

West's (1999) unabashed cry for Black leaders with *courage* all help to construct how I define

Black leadership. I define a Black leader as a socially conscious *mapmaker,* who assists people

in fashioning their own maps to navigate identity, emotions, and decisions within an oppressive

society. This does not mean that all Black people are devoid of direction, on the contrary, true

leadership speaks to and encourages the internal direction within an individual's heart. Like West

(1999), I define Black leadership development as the process of studying the historical

relationships between Black leaders and the Black community, to nurture a "collective critical

consciousness" (p. 57).

An Afrocentric Perspective

In this review of literature on Black leadership development, or the *making of*

mapmakers, it helps me as a researcher to take an Afrocentric view of Black leadership. Molefi

Asante describes the importance of Afrocentric perspectives in his article *The Afrocentric Idea in Education* (1991). Asante writes:

> As Woodson contends, African Americans have been educated away from their own culture and traditions and attached to the fringes of European culture thus dislocated from themselves, Woodson asserts African Americans often valorize European culture to the demise of their own. (Asante, 1991 p.170)

Asante goes on to define the centrist perspective, writing:

> Centricity is a concept that can be applied to any culture. The centrist paradigm is supported by research showing that the most productive method of teaching any student is to place his or her group within the center of the context of knowledge. (Asante, 1990)

Discussing the Afrocentric paradigm Kunjufu, (2006) expounds "When you are African-centered, you no longer see the world [and yourself] through another person's eyes. You see the world through your own perspective" (p. xiii).

Approaching the literature of Black leadership from an Afrocentric perspective incorporates the historical understanding that not all Black leaders have had to cultivate their leadership abilities under imperialistic oppression. Some African leaders had the freedom to focus their creative leadership, and ideas, on developing tools to better society such as Imhotep the first medical doctor or Ahmose the father of mathematics (Kunjufu, 2006). A historical look of the accomplishments of ancient African leaders, juxtaposed a contemporary review of literature on African American leaders in the United States displays how unique Black leaders in America have had to be in order to overcome the heat and fire of racism. To better understand the Black male HBCU presidents in this study the following review of Black leadership typologies helps to display Black models of leadership in the 1900s.

A Review of Black Leadership Typologies

The arrays of Black leadership styles, models, philosophies, and approaches have often been conceptualized through typologies. I believe typologies, as a research analysis tool, have some strengths and weaknesses. Typologies help us to study a variety of historical Black leadership phenomenon in simple terms and easily understood generalizations. However, typologies of Black leadership often trivializes the individuality, spark, and genius of Black leaders who have had to adapt, disrupt, and respond to the heat of structural racism in America. This withstanding, I review the Black leadership typologies of Myrdal (1944), Burgess (1962), Tryman (1977), and West (1999).

In the book *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy Volume II,* Swedish social scientist Gunnar Myrdal introduces a binary depiction of Black leadership. Myrdal writes: "We base our typology of Negro leadership upon two extreme policies on behalf of the Negro as a subordinated caste: *Accommodation* and *Protest"* (Myrdal, 1944 p.720). The following table depicts the results of Myrdal's research on Black leadership development typologies.

Table 3: Myrdal's Black Leadership Typology

Accommodation	Protest
Accommodation is undoubtedly stronger than protest, particularly in the South where the structure of caste is most pervasive and unyielding. In a sense, accommodation is historically the "natural" or the "normal" behavior of Negros, and even at present the most "realistic" one. But it is practically never wholeheartedly in any American Negro however well adjusted to his situation he seems to be. Every Negro has some feeling of protest against caste, and every Negro has some sort of conflict with the White world. (p. 720)	There has always been another type of Negro leader than the "pussy footing" Uncle Tom. The leaders of numerous slave insurrections- Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner and many others known and unknown. They rose against overwhelming odds and succumbed with their followers. Many plots were prematurely revealed to the White masters by Negro stool pigeons who sought to curry favor for their betrayal. American Negros, in attempting to integrate themselves into American society have had to pay the price of forgetting their historical heroes and martyrs. (p. 736)

Myrdal's typology of *accommodation* v. *protest* serves as the basis for much of the proceeding research on Black leadership types. Myrdal establishes a continuum of Black leadership types that are examined through a Eurocentric lens, which places each Black leadership type in reference to the leaders ability to work within the White power structure. Smith (1982) writes:

> The goals methods and rhetoric of militants are less acceptable to the dominant group of whites than are those of moderates… in the literature leaders are more or less militant to the extent that there goals methods and rhetoric diverge from the conventional goals, methods, and rhetoric deemed appropriate by dominate class whites. (Smith, 1982 p.25)

As Smith notes, the measuring stick by which Black leaders have been traditionally evaluated in academic research uses a Eurocentric lens. Here the only connection with Black leadership and identity is seen as how Black leaders impact the identity and motivations of the dominant White class. However, later works by Tryman (1977) and West (1999) begin to look at Black leadership in relation to Black identity and the views of the Black community. Another study worth noting is the Burgess (1962) study; *Negro Leadership in a Southern City* which examined power, desegregation, and the sub-community. Burgess developed a four-fold typology (see Table 4) in her study of Black leaders in Durham, North Carolina between the years of 1957 and 1961. At the time, Durham was an epicenter for Black entrepreneurship, increasing economic mobility, and educational opportunity.

Table 4: Burgess' Typology of Black Leadership

Conservatives	Moderates	Liberals	Radicals
Those persons who are least likely to voice opposition to caste, conforming closely to Myrdal's accommodation pattern of "pleading to whites" (Smith, 1984 p.22)	Are characterized as functional leaders who subordinate their role as race leaders to their role as leaders in the community in general (Smith, 1984 p.22)	Participation by a small but growing group of college professors, willing to use a number of means to gain their formal and informal demands- petitions, lawsuits, the ballot, boycotts, they are not above practical bargaining. (Burgess, 1962 p.184)	Martin Luther King is their ideal. They want an end to segregation in all areas of life immediately. They are angry young men who prefer boycott and mass demonstration to the slower procedures of arbitration and litigation. (Burgess 1962 p.185)

In 1977 Donald Tryman published *A Typology of Black Leadership* (see Table 5) which

introduced concepts of Black racial identity and the relationship of Black leaders to the Black

community, which Tryman calls "the Black masses" (p.2). Tryman, in describing Malcolm X's

Religious Nationalist type of leadership writes:

> The emphasis upon culture as a basis for political action is manifested in an emphasis
> upon Black pride and a positive identity as a basis for other orientations (Tryman, 1977
> p.3)

Table 5: Tryman's Typology of Black Leadership

Traditional-Brokerage	Cultural Nationalist	Religious Nationalist	Faddist-Rhetorical
Typical Black minister, during a racial crisis, a brokerage function between the Black community and the White power structure, in which certain concessions are made to them (the leaders) in return for the allegiance of Blacks to the political machine. (Tryman, 1977 p.19)	Tend to be charismatic with a strong nationalist orientation, although they are distinguished from the religious nationalist by the fact that culture rather than religion is their main emphasis (Tryman, 1977 p.20)	This leadership type attempts to politicize religion and use it as a dogma and rationale in order to promote self-determination and intra-integration, i.e. the use of religion as a means to an end, while at the same time promoting identity. (Tryman, 1977 p.20)	These leaders tend to engage in the revolution because it's "the latest thing to do"; it is in vogue, so to speak. Characterized by rhetoric such as "off the pig", "power to the people", and other rhetorical philosophy denoting a political revolution. (Tryman, 1977 p.21)

Tryman's work introduces concepts of Black racial identity and Black power to the

academic discourse on Black leadership. These concepts are expounded in Cornel West's work,

as he examines the notable absence of a "collective critically conscious" Black leaders in

contemporary America (West, 1999). West finds present-day Black political leaders can be

grouped under three types: race-effacing managerial leaders, race-identifying protest leaders, and

race-transcending prophetic leaders (West 1999, p.58-61).

Table 6: West's Typology of Black Leadership

Race-Effacing Managers	Race-identifying Protest Leaders	Race-transcending Prophetic Leaders
This type survives on sheer political savvy and thrives on personal diplomacy. This kind of candidate is the lesser of two evils in a political situation where the only other electoral choice is a conservative (usually White) politician. Yet this type of leader tends to stunt progressive development and silence the prophetic.	Confining themselves to the Black turf, vowing to protect their leadership status over it, and serving as power brokers with powerful non-Black elites to "enhance" this Black turf. In short, race-identifying protest leaders in the post -- Civil Rights era, function as figures who White Americans must appease so that the plight of the Black poor is overlooked and forgotten.	Rare in contemporary Black America. To be an elected official and prophetic leader requires personal integrity and political savvy, moral vision and prudential judgment, courageous defiance and organizational patience. The present generation has yet to produce such a figure.

The aforementioned typologies have some similar themes and explanations. For instance each of the typologies display some form of continuum showing a spectrum of leadership modalities. Additionally, each typology wrestles with the strategy of adopting a pro-White/anti-Black perspective in an effort to satisfy the oppressive expectations of the social order. Similarly at the other end of the spectrum exist a trapped pro-Black/ anti-White rhetoric devoid of any results oriented contemplations on equity, strategy, or planning. These typologies offer a language in which to interpret how this study's Black male HBCU presidents conceptualize self-concept and leadership.

HBCU presidents sit at the intersection of Black racial identity and Black leadership. Thus, HBCU presidents may have invaluable life stories to better understand how to navigate Black identity and leadership in the 20th Century. This study combines a wealth of analysis on the literature of Black racial identity formation and the literature on Black leadership development to better understand how HBCU presidents stand as cornerstones and *mapmakers* in the historic narrative of the long struggle for freedom in Black America.

Summary

This chapter provided a critical review of literature on Black racial identity formation theory and Black leadership. The information on identity theory assisted in understanding the complexities involved with the development of identity for Black people in America. Especially beneficial was the concept that identity is partially shaped by an *external worldview* (Tatum, 1999; West 1999). Thomas' (1971) research provided an important the connection between identity formation and Black studies. This connection becomes paramount to the investigation of the lives of Black male HBCU presidents. Equally beneficial was to me was Price's (2009) creative use of language when he wrote the statement *fashioning a collective identity* through organizations. To me, this aligns with West's (1999) literature, which cites the aim of Black leadership development is to *nurture a collective critical consciousness*. The literature on collective conceptions adds to the understanding of HBCUs as organizations with the potential to cultivate positive concepts of Blackness in educational spheres. Thus, the lived experiences of Black male HBCU presidents provide an alternative look at Black racial identity intertwined with Black leadership in Black spaces.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

So as we get more Black Ph.Ds and more Black people with a little more depth and human capital we will hopefully get to the stage where we can set aside people who think, and try to help us understand the world a little better and evolve."
–HBCU President Smith *(Interview 2 of 3)*

Introduction

The words of HBCU President Smith speak to the gravity and importance to which Black educational researchers approach their work. Like President Smith I hope this study helps us all to understand the world a little better. With that aim, in this Chapter, I will discuss the social science methods utilized in this study.

The remaining text of this chapter details life narrative methodology, as it was applied for this project. These details include: (a) discussing how the central research question and conceptual framework inform this methodological choice, (b) discussing sampling and participant/site selection, (c) describing data collection techniques (i.e., interviews; field notes; documents; and artifacts), and (d) describing data analysis and interpretation, including related credibility issues. Moreover, the methodological tools and techniques outlined, in this chapter, were implemented to work towards an in-depth understanding of the identity and leadership qualities of three Black male long-term HBCU presidents.

Central Research Question

The central research question for this study is: *What identity and leadership qualities of three Black males emerge as conducive to acquiring and sustaining their positions as Presidents*

of Historically Black Colleges and Universities? The research question seeks to inform on topics

of identity, life processes, higher education processes, approaches to leadership, and the life

decisions of Black male HBCU presidents. Qualitative researchers Cross (1971, 1995), Jackson

(1978), Thomas (1971), and Price (2009) organize, and interpret qualitative data on how people

form self-concept and operationalize their understanding of identity in society. Anthropologist

Charles Price describes identities as, "storehouses of information that persons draw on to

navigate their lives" (Price, 2009, p. 101).

      With this understanding of identity, it helps to look at the research question as a search

for a better understanding of how Black racial identity is enacted within the context of the US

(Cross anf Fhagen-Smith, 2012). Understanding how these men perceive their identities helps to

conceptualize how these Black men "navigate their lives," (Price, 2009, p. 101) within a racially

oppressive U.S. society (Price, 2009). Therefore, to understand the life navigation process for the

study participants it is most appropriate to use the life narrative research methodology.

      Czarniawska writes, "narrative offers an alternative form of knowing" (Czarniawska

2000 p. 8). By using the life narrative method the study participants speak through life stories

and offer multiple epistemological realities of the functions of Black male identity and Black

leadership. The aim of this study is to negotiate what it means to be a Black male long-term

HBCU President in the U.S. In addition to the central question driving research decisions on

methodology, a conceptual framework is research technique used to visually display the

connections between the people in the study, prior theory, relevant literature, the pilot study, and

the personal experiences of the researcher. (Maxwell, 2008)

Conceptual Framework

Maxwell (2008) details a conceptual framework in his article "Designing a qualitative study"

Maxwell writes:

> What do you think is going on with the issues, settings, or people you plan to study? What theories, beliefs, and prior research findings will guide or inform your research, and what literature, preliminary studies, and personal experiences will you draw on for understanding the people or issues you are studying? (Maxwell, 2008 p. 216)

For me the conceptual framework has become a tool to display how my research question, methods, and underpinning concepts have evolved throughout the research design process. For example, my initial conceptual framework was the image of a closed fist, where each of the five knuckles on the hand represented different motivational characteristics of HBCU leaders with corresponding literature on each knuckle i.e. integrity, commitment to social action, racial pride, Black history, etc. (West, 1999; Woodson, 1933; Kunjufu, 2003, 2006). However, as my research question progressed and I discussed my ideas with researchers, administrators, and HBCU alums I began to think deeper about the intrinsic qualities of self-representation in leadership narratives at HBCUs. My second conceptual framework depicted a pair of retro-style framed Black glasses next to the Critical Race Theory (CRT) construct of *counter-story-telling*[3] with related literature citations i.e. (Bell, 1979; Freeman, 1977; Delgado, 1971; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Hughes, 2008; DeCuir-Gunby, 2004; Dorsey and Dixon, 2004, Delgado & Stefanic, 2012). Though the image of the glasses represented my research goal of learning how to *see* race and leadership through the eyes of Black male HBCU presidents, conferring with research experts enlightened my approach. I realized the CRT counter-storytelling concept, though valuable, in this study's context it brought with it presumptions that all the stories I would collect for the

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[3] *Counter-Story-Telling:* A tool often used by people of color to understand how racism operates and functions. Black and brown writers recount their experiences with racism to assess the master narrative (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012).

study would be *counter* to the dominant narrative of Black men in America. This conceptual framework and research design left no room for new revelations, nuances, and diversity among narrators.

Lastly, I thought more on Maxwell's (2008) advice to draw on my personal experiences to understand the people and issues of the study. The aim was to depict the research study design to capture my struggles and triumphs with Black racial identity, Black studies, and the collective Black identity I fashioned at an HBCU. These experiences informed how I understood the people and issues in the study. The conceptual framework below (Figure 6:) depicts the study's logic model. The conceptual framework depicts the problem of *deficit Black racial identity* (Irizarry, 2009; Bladwin, 1906; Morrow, 2003) and the solution of an *educated identity through Black studies and a collective critical consciousness* (Thomas, 1971; West, 1999). Then, the conceptual framework depicts the theoretical underpinnings from literature on *Black racial identity* (Cross, 1971, 1995; Thomas, 1971; Jackson, 1978; Phinney1989, 1990, 1993;Tatum, 1992, 2003; Helms, 1990; Price 2009) and *Black leadership development* (Myrdal; 1944; Bachrach & Baratz, 1970; Tryman, 1977; West, 1999; Burgess; 1962; Tryman; 1977; Smith, 1982) in the U.S. Lastly, the conceptual framework depicts how the issues and literature influenced the pilot study, and how the pilot study influenced the final study.

Figure 6. Conceptual Framework Black Male Presidents of HBCUs: A Life Narrative Study
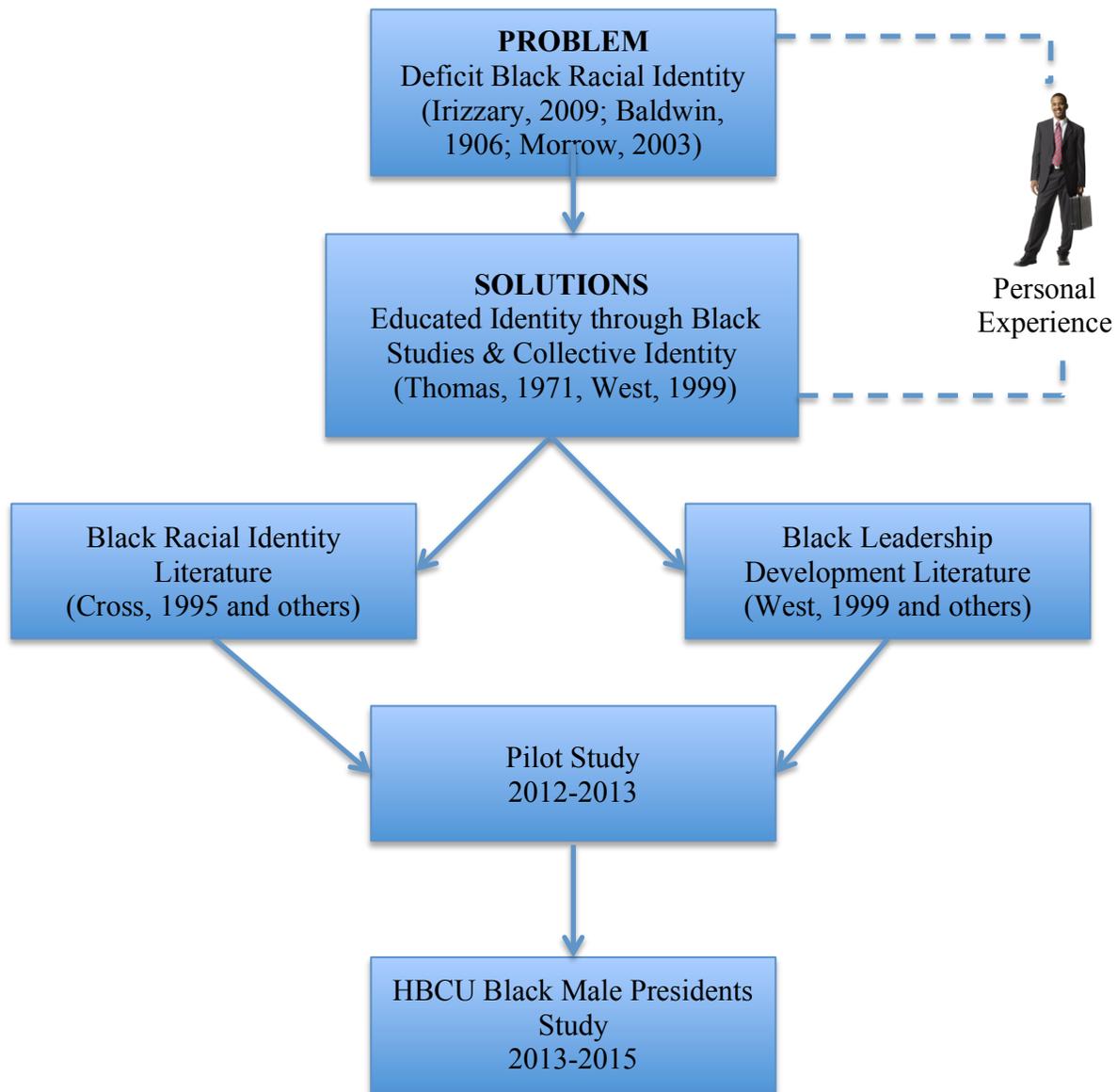
This conceptual framework (also commonly referenced as a tentative theo`ry) influenced the

research method choice of life narrative. The importance of using life narrative in this study is

not solely to understand the identity of the narrators but also to provide a larger understanding of

how these men use their identities to lead and shape collective identities at HBCUs. This concept

of interwoven identities is discussed in a study of Malcolm X:

> Malcolm's search for a positive identity both for himself and more generally for Black
> Americans illustrates how personal and social identity are intertwined, how narrative is
> crucial to both forms of identity and how society can be transformed by changing
> personal and social narratives (Josselson, 2006. p.220)

As Josselson's book *Identity and Story: creating self in narrative* describes the power of

narrative transforms society. To understand more about the power of narrative we will explore

literature on the life- narrative methodology.

Life Narrative

The following is a discussion on the life narrative method and scholars who use this

method for social science research. Life narrative is an umbrella of many genres including: life

story, biography, oral history, life history, autobiography, testimonials, and more. The art of

storytelling is not solely an exclusive research method connected to the ivory towers of research

universities (Josselson, 2006; Raggatt, 2006). I have found if I am still enough, I can hear the

wind whistling, smell the morning dew, and feel the coarse bark of woodland trees. All of nature

sings a story that dates back to before we were born. Some Africans say the narratives of their

ancestors can be felt in the storylines of a beating drum. Today African American youth

memorize and retell life narrative through Hip Hop lyrics, Def poetry slams, and neo-soul riffs.

The indigenous people have long used the power and verbosity of life narrative tales. In the

following selection Smith (2010) recounts the historical origins of life narrative:

> The oral performance of self-narrative has existed in many indigenous cultures
> prior to literacy—in, for example, the naming songs of Native American cultures,
> the oral narratives of genealogy and descent among Africans, the communal self-
> locating of the "song lines" of indigenous Australians, and others. (p. 103)

The life narrative method uses the art of storytelling to analyze individuals' lives. Czarniawska (2004) defines this type of qualitative research as "a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected" (p. 17). Goodall (2014) expands on this understanding of life narrative describing it as:

> Individual or mutual self-disclosure, where in the methods of disclosure are used to situate, coordinate, detail and explain or retell pivotal events in a personal or organizational life. (p. 104)

Goodall finds the life narrative method allows the researcher to enter the world of the narrator through the retelling events that are pivotal and have *meaning for the narrator*. As noted by the work of Tillman (2002) and Harper (2010) it is important for the research to reflect meanings as constructed by the narrators. Emerson (2011) writes:

> All too frequently, ethnographic field notes fail to attend consistently to member's meanings, instead importing outside or exogenous categories and meanings. (p.131)

Life narrative research is an umbrella of many forms including: biography, autobiography, autoethnography, personal narrative, oral history, life stories, and other forms (Denzin, 1989; Ellis, 2004; Smith & Watson, 2010; Ellis, 2009; Kellet, 1999; Plummer, 1983; Polkinghorne, 1995; Cresswell, 2012).

This study uses the life stories form of life narrative research. A primary value of this approach is the focus on stories and making sense of stories within a social and historical context. My research approach is informed by the work of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Czarniawska (2004), Creswell (2007), and Ivor Goodson (2013), Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, (2011) and Denzin (1989). In preparation for this research I studied Ivor Goodson's (2013) book *Developing Narrative Theory: Life Histories and Personal Representation*. Goodson's life

narrative research focused on the homeless, immigrants, politicians, and other diverse groups to

show the multiple perspectives and approaches to formal and informal education. His work

helped me think about locating the narratives of Black male HBCUs presidents withinin an

oppressive, yet triumphant, historical context. Goodson writes:

> To understand such a life story genre properly it has to be read against the
> backdrop of the historical context which privileges certain, storylines. To do that
> is to move from life story collection to life history construction, whereby the
> historical context is integrated and elaborated. The collection of stories that
> merely embellish or elaborate mainstream stories…essentially stay close to a prior
> script and in that sense merely fortify patterns of domination. (p.5)

Goodson's approach to research has helped my journey to locate multiple truths within life

narratives, without "fortifying patterns of domination" (Goodson, 2013 p.5). This study provides

an analysis of each narrator in Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6. In each of these chapters I

examine four Black identity functions and two Black leadership typologies utilizing the

qualitative techniques of memo writing, coding, an adaptation of constant comparison[4], thematic

analysis, and reflection (Cresswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1965; Emerson, Fritz, and Shaw,

2011; Noblit et al., 2004). In each of these chapters I argue that four functions of Black identity

explain why and how these men became long-term HBCU presidents: (a) the *bridging function*,

bi-or multi-cultural competence; (b) the *individualism function*, youth leadership experience; (c)

the *buffering* function, the ability to translate challenges into opportunities; and (d) the *bonding*

function experience building Black organizations and programs (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-

Smith, 1999). I also argue that the Black male HBCU presidents studied are dynamic leaders

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[4] *The Constant Comparison Method of Analysis* can be described in four stages (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory [setting boundaries], and (4) writing the theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1965 p. 439). My adaptation of the constant comparison method uses stages 1-3, and does not attempt to form a new theory. Instead my argument presents a thematic analysis of four functions of Black identity factors and a dynamic explanation of accommodation and protest typologies.

who utilize both *accommodation* and *protest* typologies. Then in chapter 7, I revisit literature

and frameworks to present my argument of a functional use of Black identity within a Black

leadership typology framework (Mrydal, 1944). To improve trustworthiness and consistency

within the study's protocol I used the procedural steps outlined by Creswell (2012) in the book

Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. In addition to

improving the validity of the study, these procedural steps aid in the expansion or future

replication of this study.

Study Considerations and Adaptations

Drawing largely from Creswell (2012), this study followed the following steps for

conducting narrative research:

Table 7: Life Narrative Study Procedural Steps

Life- Narrative Procedural Steps Creswell (2012)	Procedural Steps Utilized in this Study
1. Determine if the research problem or question best fits narrative research.	1. I examined previous literature, conferred with educational research experts, and determined life narrative was the best method to respond to the central research question and conceptual framework.
2. Select one or more individuals who have stories or life experiences to tell and spend considerable time with them gathering their life stories.	2. I initially selected two individuals for this study, and then upon discussion with research expert expanded my study to three individuals. I spent a minimum of 3.5 hours with each participant through three interviews.
3. Collect information about the context of these stories. Situate stories within the participants (jobs, race or ethnicity, time and place).	3. I conducted extensive literature reviews on *Black racial identity* and *Black leadership*, with a focus on situating the stories in the time periods and HBCU U.S. contexts in which the narrators lived (See chapter 2)
4. Analyze the participants' stories and then "re-story" them in a framework that makes sense (Creswell, 2007, p.56).	4. I analyzed the participants stories by processing field notes to represent member's meanings, transcribing and thematically coding interview data to re-story an argument of that four functions of Black identity and the dynamic use of two Black leadership typologies explain why and how these men became long-term HBCU presidents (Emerson 2011).

This study is in line with the tenets of positionality, reflexivity and representation (Noblit et al., 2004).

Original Data Collection

No research method is guaranteed to yield totally trustworthy conclusions (Phillips, 1987). However by planning effective data collection techniques it can aid in the process of improving validity, reliability, and data convergence. The nuanced nature of this study speaks to a population that has not been studied in this way before, which suggests that the findings will be "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 290).

This study has collected data from three narrators all meeting the sampling criteria of: (1) current or former HBCU presidents, (2) male, (3) served at least 10 years in higher education administration, and (4) self-identified as Black or African American. Collecting data from three narrators helps this study to work toward triangulation[5]. Triangulation is a method used to enhance rigorousness. Denzin (1978) describes four different types of triangulation to include: (1) *data triangulation*, where data is collected from different sources (2) *investigator triangulation*, where different researchers independently collect data on the same phenomena and compare notes (3) *methodological triangulation*, where multiple methods of data collection are used, and (4) *theory triangulation*, where different theories are used to interpret a set of data. Later Janesick (1994) added a fifth type of triangulation called (5) *interdisciplinary triangulation*, where more than one field informs the research process i.e.; Black psychology, anthropology, Black studies, and political science. This study design uses two forms of

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[5] The concept of *triangulation* emerges from navigation, military strategy, and surveying as a method for fixing a position or location (Julie & Hassard, 2005). The concept was introduced to social science research by Campbell & Fiske (1959) and has served as a bridge between quantitative and qualitative epistemologies (Denzin, 2007).

triangulation to include: (a) *data triangulation* (Silverman, 1985), and (b) *interdisciplinary triangulation* (Janesick, 1994).

Original Data Collection: Sampling Technique

This study initially sought to yield 1 to 2 participants. This initial sampling plan was in line with Creswell's (2012) procedural recommendations for life narrative. Creswell writes: "select one or more individuals who have stories or life experiences to tell, and spend considerable time with them gathering their life stories" (p. 56). After several months of deliberation with researchers in the fields of anthropology, education policy, cultural studies, and sociology, the study was expanded to include three narrators. By expanding the number of participants, it allowed the study to work toward triangulation of data. Research finds in addition to increasing convergent validation and reliability (Denzin, 2007; Silverman, 1985), triangulation can also, "capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the [narrator] under study" (Julie & Hassard, 2005 p.11).

The study sample was selected through purposeful and convenience sampling strategies. Purposeful sampling involved developing a, "framework of variables" participants (Marshall, 1996, p. 523) who were: (1) current or former HBCU presidents, (2) male, (3) served at least 10 years in higher education administration, and (4) self-identify as Black. There were barriers to obtaining participants from this group. Twenty potential participants fitting the framework of variables were contacted via phone and email. Out of the twenty contacted I received three responses that the potential participant was not interested in participating the study and seventeen non-responses, after three attempts each over a 90 day period. All of the participants were

obtained through convenience sampling which, as Marshall states is the "selection of the most accessible subject" (Marshall, 1996, p. 523).

This form of sampling required me to work through back channels, networks, and relationships. To gain entry with the first narrator, President Thomas, I asked a former HBCU colleague, to connect me with President Thomas because he fit the sampling framework criteria. For the second narrator, President Smith, it was a combination of peer deliberation as I was venting to a longtime friend on the difficulty in finding participants then he said he knew a family relative who also fit the criteria and had recently expressed a desire to write a book on a similar topic. The third narrator was a friend of a mentor who connected us through email and gave me President Lynn's cell phone number. Two other potential participants were identified through similar networking processes. Both presidents were not able to commit to the *in-depth* interview time commitment of at least 3.5 hours. All of these experiences speak to the difficulty of entry to this population and the low relative numbers of Black men who are current or former long-term HBCU presidents. The lack of avaiable participants also speaks to the nuanced nature of this study, the willingness of participants, and the interest in the topic. It was a combination of serendipitous acts of kindness and decades of trust built in relationships that gave me entry into the world of Black male HBCU presidents. Given the small sample, the study findings cannot be generalized to all Black male HBCU presidents. However, it does present information on why and how Black male HBCU presidents construct leadership identities. Plummer (2001) in his book *Documents of life 2: An invitation to a critical humanism* speaks to the problem of representativeness in life history research. Plummer writes:

> this completely misunderstands the nature of such research- where insights, understandings, appreciation, intimate, familiarity are the goals and not 'facts', explanations or generalizations. (Plummer, 2001 p. 153)

As Plummer states my goal in this study is not to generalize all Black male long-term HBCU presidents, but to analyze intimate life stories to better understand the identity and leadership qualities of these men.

Original Data Collection Techniques (Interviews, Field Notes, Documents, Artifacts)

Since the study design works towards triangulation to locate converging data, collection techniques were utilized to collect comparable data. These data collection techniques included (a) in-depth interviews, (b) field notes, (c) documents, and (d) artifacts.

In-depth Interviews

For this study I utilized both semi-structured and structured interviews. In the first interview with each participant. I always used the same semi-structured interview protocol. The guidelines for the interview protocol provided by Patton (1990), Weiss (1994), and Maynes (2008) for order, wording, and modifications (see Figure 7 below).

Figure 7. Semi-structured HBCU President Life Narrative Protocol

Q1: Where were you born?
Q2: Tell me about your parents?
Q3: How did you perform in school, and why?
Q4: (a) How did you form your identity? or (b) How do you see yourself? or (c) What makes you who you are?
Q5: What makes HBCUs unique?
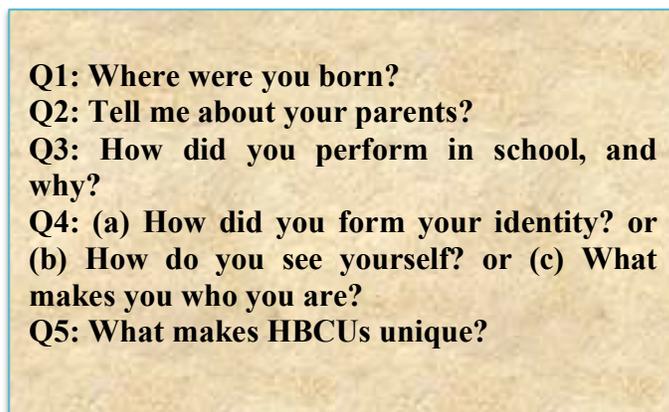
Each participant was interviewed face-to-face three times, with each interview lasting 60 to 120 minutes. Each participant chose an interview time and location (office or home) convenient for his schedule. To give each interviewee my full attention and ensure accurate documentation I audiotaped the interviews with their consent. A consent form approved by UNC-Chapel Hill's Internal Review Board (IRB) was given to each narrator to sign. There was one request by a participant to cut off the audiotape during a point of elaboration and I complied with this request. The first of the three interviews established strong standardized baseline data, which assisted in the meta-analysis of multiple narrators. However, I quickly realized the structured interviews did not allow the narrators to speak freely to the pressing issues on their hearts. For the second and third interviews I used the *unstructured interview* technique informed by Bernard (2011), where the aim is to gain trust and let narrators open up. Bernard writes:

> Unstructured interviews are based on a clear plan that you keep constantly in mind, but are also characterized by a minimum of control over the people's responses. The idea is to get people to open up and let them express themselves in their own terms at their own pace. (Bernard, 2011 p.157)

Field notes: Jottings, Notes, and Memos

During each interview I would occasionally, write down quick jottings or notes, depending on the narrator. Emerson (2011) writes:

> While participating in the field and attending to ongoing scenes, events, and interactions, field researchers may, at moments decide that certain events and impressions should be written down as they are occurring in order to preserve accuracy and detail. In these circumstances, the field researcher moves beyond mere "headnotes" to record jottings- a brief written record of events and impressions captured in key words or phrases (p. 29)

I found two of the three narrators began to measure their words whenever I would write jottings. For example President Smith, the only current HBCU president in the study, began to slow down his pace of speech when I began jotting notes. I learned to limit my note-taking and switched to making head notes that I would later write down immediately in the car before leaving. Each

interview required me to drive up to five hours each way. These long driving trips provided an opportunity for me to play the recorded audio interviews and make mental connections. For example, on one such trip home I kept replaying a recording of an interview with Chancellor Thomas. In this interview he said the following statement with such passion and baritone voice inflection I understood the statement had a deep and profound meaning for his self-concept. Chancellor Thomas said,

> World War II scared the hell out of the White man, when the Negro soldier went off to war in 1941 as a Negro boy and came back in 1945 as a Black man. When he was a boy he would work at the service station changing tires and say 'yessir'. Then he got drafted. I am no longer Spencer Thomas I'm private Jones (poking out his chest as he narrates) Now I'm Sargent Spencer Thomas…I'm a man… (Chancellor Thomas Interview 1 of 3)

As I replayed this audio clip over, and over, it began to have a profound meaning to me on how Chancellor Thomas remembered a culture of racism and an individual Black manhood experience. As Chancellor Thomas' statement moved from third person stating "he was a boy", then to first person as he said, "I'm a man." When I returned to my office I was then able to write down well thought out connections, concepts, and comparisons of data. Then after collecting data from the first interview i.e. field notes, jottings, headed notes and audio recordings, I was able to stop -breath- and plan for follow-up questions that I intended to use as prodding and clarifying questions in the two subsequent instructed interviews. While conducting subsequent interviews I began to manually transcribe the previously recorded audiotaped interviews into a word document. As a quality check I would speak into *Dragon* or *Apple*'s word recognition, the double check for accuracy as I manually transcribed.

Once I had a significant number of interviews completed and large chucks of data

transcribed and thematically coded[6] I was able to begin to write integrative memos. Emerson

(2011) describes these integrative memos as:

> Memos that elaborate ideas and begin to link or tie codes and bits of data together…to explore relationships between coded fields that link together a variety of discrete observations to provide a more sustained examination of a theme or issue. (p.193)

Documents

Two types of documents were collected for this study, to include: (1) *Contemporary documents*,

i.e. Books, studies, reports, and articles; and (2) *Historical documents,* i.e. presidential letters,

archival material, and on-site historical library resources. These documents were used to

collaborate the accounts of the narrators. In accordance with IRB privacy policies these

documents, which contained identifying information, about the narrators and their respective

HBCUs are not disclosed in this study.

Artifacts

One of the most impactful forms of data collected for this analysis was the artifacts found in the

homes and/or offices of the narrators. These artifacts included; pieces of art, framed pictures of

organizational management plans, pictures of buildings named in their honor, pictures of

graduation ceremonies, African art, and more. These artifacts where in a way how these men

gave meaning to the artifacts, or how they communicated messages about themselves. These

artifacts became reflections of self-concept, culture and leadership through the meanings these

men attached to them. Anthropologist use artifacts and symbols to analyze cultures (Ortner,

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[6] I used the comments featured on a word processing document to code lines and chunks of data by theme using an early form of data analysis to build analytical connections. Emerson writes, "qualitative coding is a way of opening up avenues of inquiry: The researcher identifies and develops concepts and analytical insights through close examination of, and reflection on, fieldnote data" (Emerson, 2011 p. 175).

1973). Business scholars provide powerful longitudinal data linking symbols to financial bottom lines (Kotter, 1992; Collins, 2002). In the book *Reframing Organizations* by Bolman and Deal (1997) the authors examine organizational leadership through culture and symbols. Bolman and Deal write:

> Symbols embody and express an organizations culture- the interwoven pattern of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts that define for members who they are and how they do things. Culture is both a product and a process. As a product it embodies accumulated wisdom from those who came before us. As a process it is continually renewed and re-created as newcomers learn old ways and eventually become teachers themselves. (p.217)

Together (a) in-depth interviews, (b) field notes, (c) documents, and (d) artifacts add important data to better understand of the central research question. Equally as important as data collection methods are the participants and sites for this study.

Selected Participants and Site Description

Data was collected over a period of three years, consisting of in-depth interviews, document review, and artifact analysis. Participants where selected through a sampling process which identified participants who could provide insider information on a formative perspective of why and how they became HBCU presidents.

Study Site 1

The first site was at the home of President Thomas. He chose to allow me to interview him at his home during the winter, spring, and summer of 2013. His home was a large southern two-story estate house on approximately a half-acre of land. He lived in an affluent White neighborhood surrounded on all sides by White neighbors. He mentioned jokingly that one of his neighbors (a White female widow) would never wave at him or acknowledge him except for the rare occasions when he would be outside conversing with another White neighbor.

His presidency was at a mid-sized public HBCU in the South with an enrollment of over 6,000 students and multiple graduate programs. Three-fourths of the student body is African American. Archival research and literature confirmed Presidents Thomas's accomplishments over ten years in office include: increasing enrollment, increasing the quality of admitted students (based on SAT scores), and improving the facilities, student services, and fundraising for the University.

Study Site 2

The second site for this study was in the office of President Smith. President Smith is a current President at a private HBCU. The three interviews were conducted in his office on the campus of the college. His office was on the top floor of a modern three story administrative building on the campus. The campus is located in a southern city and features a mix of high-tech contemporary structures and restored historic buildings dating back to the late 1800s. In the center of the campus sits an historic Black church, where student activities and religious services are held. During one of my visits the church was packed with local high school students participating in a summer enrichment program; at another visit the church was filled with harmony, rhythm, and charisma from a gospel-performing group. The student dorms are also located near the center of campus. During a visit I observed over 50 African American males socializing outside the dorm, tossing an occasional football, and chatting with female students on campus. The enrollment of the college is over 2,500 students, of whom 95% are African American. Archival research confirms President Smith's accomplishments of: increasing the enrollment, dramatically improving the local Black community, and building multiple new facilities in his over ten years in office.

Study Site 3

The third site for this study was at the home of President Lynn. President Lynn is a former President at two HBCUs, and has served over 15 years in administration. Two of the three interviews took place at his condo and one interview was at a nearby health foods eatery. President Lynn, was cordial and friendly, his work schedule was demanding so I was appreciative of the time he carved out to accommodate this study. His attention to detail and value for learning was evident in his vegan diet. I joined him for a meal, which was essentially a bowl of beans, rice, corn, Black olives, peas, cilantro herbs, and guacamole. As I ate I could taste the bold flavors and nutrients packed in this vegan bowl. Similarly, President Lynn's words were packed full of wisdom and pivotal personal experiences. He is a natural communicator, and he mentioned he was passionate about mentoring young Black male students. I could tell that he was investing in me like a mentee and was pouring knowledge into me like a partially filled glass.

His up-scale condo was immaculately clean, organized, and decorated with Afrocentric artifacts. For the first interview we sat in his living room. As I interviewed him I sat across from an African art statue. It was similar to an east African fertility symbol with an enlarged head and smaller stubby arms. As I was interviewing President Lynn his African statue was interviewing me and calling me to inquire about all of President Lynn's Afrocentric art. For the third interview we sat in his office. He sat on the couch and I placed my audio recorders on the arm of the couch and sat cattycorner to hime in a chair. The entire time I leaned my body into the conversation to give him my full attention. His performance style of oration, kept me on the edge

of my seat. He even sang a rendition of a song he sung for his wife years ago while reminiscing and discussing his hidden talents.

His first presidency was at a state University with multiple campuses with over 2,500 students, 95% are African American. Research confirms that President Lynn is credited with creating an African educational center and top-rated lecture series that featured nationally recognized scholars. He also served as president for a large public University with over 9,000 students, 85% are African American. This University has undergraduate and graduate programs with multiple campuses. President Lynn's home, the cite for two of the three interviews, was pristinely clean and organized with an Afrocentric décor.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis of data was largely informed by the *Constant Comparison Method of Analysis* work of Glaser & Strauss (1965); the *thematic analysis* work of Miles and Huberman (1994); with a emphasis on capturing the *member's meanings* as noted by (Emerson et al, 2011). This study design uses the triangulation of data to increase rigor (Silverman, 1985). The following Figure 8 Data Triangulation depicts how data is used in the analysis and interpretation of study. Julie (2005) writes the use of triangulation helps to, "capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the [narrators] under study" (p.11).

Figure 8. Data Triangulation
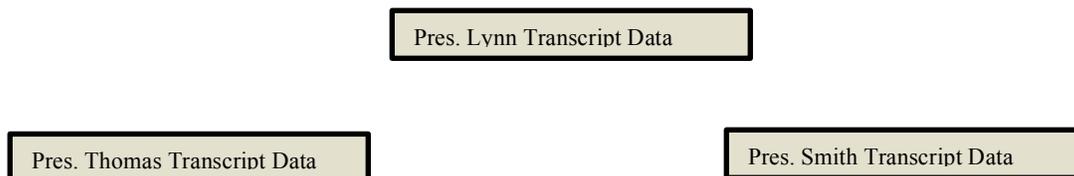
Pres. Lynn Transcript Data

Pres. Thomas Transcript Data

Pres. Smith Transcript Data

The Constant Comparison Method of Analysis can be described in four stages (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory [setting boundaries], and (4) writing the theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1965 p. 439). My adaptation of the constant comparison method uses stages 1-3, and does not attempt to form a new theory. My argument is that four functions of Black identity and the dynamic use of two Black leadership typologies explain why and how these men became long-term HBCU presidents (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith 1999; Myrdal, 1944)

Data was organized using Atlas.ti to analyze themes across stories (Creswell, 2007, p. 54). In addition to Atlas.ti, poignant transcript quotes were written on the backs of index cards and moved across a large table to create columns of similar data schema. This index card method of comparison and analysis was informed by anthropologist Charles Price, who has used similar methods in his work. The transcribed contextual data was coded by a *thematic analysis*, which was informed by Miles and Huberman (1997), who write:

> The organizing part will entail some system for categorizing the various chunks, so the researcher can quickly find, pull out and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, hypothesis, construct or theme (p. 57).

Coding of data began with line-by-line coding and then moved to thematic coding. I used a modified constant comparison method of jointly coding and analyzing to work on establishing my arguments using both coding and analytic procedures (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). Additionally, historical artifacts like presidential letters and books coupled with literature, field notes, and pictures helped to add context to the analysis. Figure 9 is intended to illustrate the process by which data has been (a) collected/organized, (b) explored, (c) analyzed, (d) represented, and (e) interpreted.

Figure 9. Qualitative Data Analysis Procedures for Black Organizational Leader Identity Study

Informed by: Cresswell (2013); Denzin (1989); Hughes, S., Pennington, J. L., & Makris, S. (2012)

Preparing the data for Analysis
- Organized documents
- Transcribed interview transcript data
- Prepared the data for analysis using Atlas.ti

Exploring the data
- Coded data
- Wrote Memos (prepared follow-up interview questions)
- Developed Qualitative code book
- Created index card quotes

Analyzing the Data
- Triangulated the data
- Performed modified constant-comparison of data
- Grouped codes into themes

Representing the Data
- Triangulation
- Represent Findingsi in discusssions of Black organizational leader idenitiy characteristics and typology

Interpreting the results
- Assessed how the research question was answered
- Compared findings
- Reflection on personal meaning of the findings and self critique
- Established argument
- State new Questions based on the findings

Credibility

As discussed in Chapter 2 the life narrative method was chosen for this study because of the appropriateness of life stories to unlock how these men perceive their identities. The life stories collected helps me to conceptualize how these Black men "navigate their lives," (Price, 2009, p. 101) within a racially oppressive U.S. society (Alexander, 2012). Therefore, to better understand the life navigation process for the study participants the most appropriate research methodology is the qualitative approach of life narrative.

The study was designed with credibility measures to increase the validity and reliability of findings. Specifically, (1) *triangulation* and (2) *member checking* where utilized to improve the trustworthiness of the research design (Denzen, 1978; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Maxwell, 1996).

As mentioned *triangulation* is "a way to get to the finding in the first place—by seeing or hearing multiple instances of it from different sources by using different methods and by squaring the finding with others it needs to be squared with" (Miles & Huberman, 1994 p. 267). Research finds that triangulation helps to situate and contextualize the central research question, which "traditionally lies inside the neatly aligned boundary of an enclosing metaphorical triangle" (Julie & Hassard, 2005 p. 111).

The study was designed to involve *member checking* and informant feedback in the way that Maxwell (1996) describes as the most effective way of eliminating the possibility of misrepresentation. For this study I regularly checked in with narrators via in-interview probes[7] using echoing (repeating back to the narrator their stated meanings), follow-up phone calls and emails, and sending each narrator raw transcript data and the written interpretations of their data.

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[7] *Probe*, "to stimulate a respondent to produce more information, without injecting yourself so much into the interaction" (Bernard, 2011 p.161)

The credibility of life narrative is dependent upon these techniques to respond to the challenges of having such small participant numbers in a given study. This study was no exception and I anticipated challenges given the relatively small sample size. On this point, Maxwell offered some guidance:

> Qualitative researchers are not only concerned solely, or even primarily, with providing a valid description of the physical objects, events, and behaviors in the settings they study; they are also concerned with what these objects, events, and behaviors mean to the people engaged in and with them" (Maxwell, 1992 p.288)

Many scholars concur with Maxwell (1992) including Connolly (1998) who argues that the objective is not to generalize but to obtain insights into particular underlying processes and practices that prevail. Likewise the process of identity formation is a hidden process, which can only be revealed by the narrator's words.

Summary

This chapter began detailing the life narrative methodology, as applied for this study. This included (a) discussing how the central research question and conceptual framework inform this methodological choice, (b) discussing sampling and participant/site selection, (c) describing data collection techniques (i.e., interviews; field notes; documents; and artifacts), and (d) describing data analysis and interpretation, including related credibility issues.

The life narrative method was selected because it better informed the experiences of my narrators within the context of life trajectory. Thus I am better positioned to make sense of their motivations and decisions. Equally important to my research is to understand the racial identity development of my informants. Life narrative method is an exemplary method in this regard. Understanding the theories outlined in Chapter 2 helped to formulate a research designed to capture the issues related to race, gender, identity, and leadership. The life stories of the narrators

speak back to dominant depictions of Black masculinity, by utilizing robust qualitative methods. Diverse data collection techniques were embedded within the research design to ensure that more diverse, thick, and rich data will be collected and triangulated. Moreover, the conceptual framework, research design, and related data analysis are all part of the larger goal to address the central research question of the study.

The aspiration is to explore and expose these hidden insights into the development of Black male leadership identities. In chapter 4, chapter 5, and chapter 6 we will enter the diverse, thick, and rich descriptions that emerged from the worlds of our narrators as they present didactic reflections of life as Black male HBCU presidents.

CHAPTER 4. The Life of President Thomas

Introduction

In seeking to understand the identitiy and leadership qualities conducive to Dr. Thomas

becoming a long-term HBCU President, I sat down with him at his private home on multiple

occasions. His conversations taught me that pain, discrimination, and war can be ingredients for

enduring leadership. His, uniquely different, life journey as a Black man in America makes it

impossible for me to articulate the fullness of his identity, personhood, and self-concept. Dr.

Thomas, like most Black people, has a complex and dynamic identity, which lays claim to

multiple identity reference points (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999). Blackness is not

monolithic. All Black people do not place race and Black culture at the center of their identity

(Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 1996). To expound Cross writes,

> Persons who start out with a *Low Salient* (LS) type of [racial] identity, may have an
> encounter or racial epiphany that impels them to convert to a *High Salient* (HS) frame of
> reference. This identity conversion process –*Nigeresnece*- depicts the four or five stages
> Black people traverse during transformation from a social outlook that minimizes race to
> a Black identity for which race and African American culture are highly central. (Cross,
> Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999 p.30)

It is this fluid nature of racial identity that makes it important to understand how Black male

presidents enact various functions of identity to navigate life in America. After discussing the

identity functions enacted in President Thomas' life story, I will then discuss how

accommodation and *protest* relate to his presidency (Myrdal,1944). Lastly, I revisit the concept

of *fashioning a collective identity* (Price, 2009), and the life stories that provide a better

understanding of President Thomas' commitment to the *Black masses,* or the Black community

in America, (Tryman 1977; West 1999). First we look at the functions of identity discussed in

Chapter 2 and how President Thomas operationalized Black racial identity as a tool on his path

to the presidency. Cross et al (1999) would operationalize Black identity as five daily functions:

(1) the *bridging* function, (2) the *individualism* function, (3) the *buffering* function, (4) the

bonding function, (5) the *code-switching* function (Cross et al, 2012; Cross, et al 1999).

Four functions (or enactments) of Black identity were found in the data and may help to

understand how President Thomas used these functions of identity to become a long-term HBCU

President. The four functions of identity I use to interpret President Thomas' life story were:

bridging, individualism, buffering, and bonding. The first of the four in the data is the *bridging*

function of Black identity. The first function of Black racial identity most prevalent in my

interpretation of the data is the bridging function.

The Bridging Function: the use of Bi-or Multi-Cultural Competence[8]

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[8] The Black racial identity function of *code switching* (or fronting) also implies the ability to bridge. The difference is that *code switching* involves the ability for African Americans to "act, think, dress, and express," (p.32) like the dominant group, which creates a bridge rooted in *fronting* and not authenticity. Overtime it requires continual fronting to maintain the bridge. The difference between *bridging* and *code switching* in this study is best described by President Smith who states, "you've got to be honest, you have to be yourself, you have to hold your own" (Interview 3 of 3). With noted exception President Thomas when asked about HBCU MBA students with locked hair he said, "having had the experience I had as VP, they saw that as a person being an animal, and when more and Black athletes came with these dreadlocks they saw that he could hit a basket or score a touchdown with these dreadlocks on they said oh, they are smart enough to hit a basket but look at their hair they are ignorant…White America by conceptualization if a person walked in with dreadlocks and applied for job as a junior executive on wall street they would say 'no' because those dreadlocks indicate that person's value or that person's expression, that person is walking around Black power! I'm showing off right now who I am and you must accept me… When White folks see that they get defensive and they say you are looking for a fight because you have dreadlocks you are trying to impose your culture on me" (President Thomas interview 1 of 3).

President Thomas' life story is filled with instances in which he was able to form relationships

that stretched beyond the socially constructed boundaries of race, class, and culture. Cross

(1999), describes this ability to create cross-cultural coalitions as the *bridging* function of Black

identity. Cross writes:

> African Americans who are as comfortable by that which makes them American as that
> which makes them Black (bi-culturality) or who relish sharing experiences with a range
> of other groups (multi-culturality), are more likely to use the bridging function [of Black
> identity]. (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999 p.32)

Cross, Strauss, and Fhagen-Smith (1999) define the bridging function of Black identity as,

referring to, "those competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that make it possible for a Black

person to immerse himself or herself in another groups' experiences, absent of a need to suppress

one's sense of Blackness" (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999 p.32). Bi- or multi-cultural

competence emerged from the data as an essential *bridging* function of Black identity in

President Thomas's life. This tool of working across racial spaces to accomplish goals helps to

explain how President Thomas became a long-term HBCU President (Calemore, 1995).

Moreover, bi- or multi-cultural competence was identified as a valuable enactment of President

Thomas' Black racial idenitiy. President Thomas recalls a *bridging* experience from his time in

the U.S. Army:

> My best friend was a White boy from Mississippi, and we had people there from the
> North, South, East, and West. And oddly enough, my closest friend during basic training
> was from Mississippi. And later on… out in San Antonio at Brooke Army Hospital, my
> closest friend and two of my college classmates were on the same base with me, but my
> closest friend was a White boy from Houston… Frank Ideallio. So I say that to say that
> my experience when it came to race and growing up in a segregated society was that the
> laws were there in the South, the unwritten laws were there in the North, but segregation
> or desegregation or separatism or togetherness was an individual thing. You found people
> of all races and religions, but then you found individuals who you could interact with or
> felt very comfortable with or reached out or just through natural selection began to
> interact.

President Thomas' genuine friendships with a "White boy from Mississippi", and another

"White boy from Houston", showed his ability to bridge relationships with individuals raised in

southern segregated environments. In order for Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream to take root

amidst the trees of racism in America it will truly require bi-cultural and multi-cultural

competent leaders like President Thomas. The *bridging* function of Black identity differs from

the second function of *individualism*, found in the data. However, through the life of President

Thomas I learned that coalitions are made when each individual can be true to himself or herself.

As I examined the lives of the presidents in this study I found that they all displayed functions of

individualism early, and began to shape an identity of a leader at a young age. Dr. Thomas states

his youth leadership activities helped him to see himself as leader at a young age and serve in

leadership roles with confidence.

The Individualism Function: Youth Leadership Experiences

Everyone has the dimension of *individualism,* and every life story is unique in its own way. I

interpret youth leadership experiences as a dimension of individualism that was also a pattern in

the lives of the narrators. The Bible states in the first book of Timothy chapter 14 and verse 12

"*Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers*

in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity" (The Bible, New International Version

Timothy 14:12). This verse speaks to the development of leadership skills as a youth. Cross,

(1999) writes, "for some social identity or reference group orientation may be grounded in

religious ideas" (p.29). Likewise, for some Black men raised in the American South religion and

leadership are often interwoven concepts of Black identity (West, 1999). Anthropologist Charles

Price uses the term, *morally configured Blackness* (Price, 2009 p.229) to describe the unique

interwoven connections of race and religion found in the personal and collective identities of

Rastafari people in Jamaica. Similarly, Black psychologist Cross (1999) defines the unique leadership function of *individualism* as, the expression of one's unique personality, in accord with the whims and dictates of the unique aspects of one's self-concept (p.33).

For President Thomas, like the other narrators, his younger years were an example of leadership in conduct, and speech. The following excerpt from President Thomas' narrative describes how he began to develop a leadership identity at an early age. President Thomas recalls:

> I attended the public schools in the South. I was valedictorian of my sixth grade, valedictorian of my twelfth grade, senior class President, and President of the student body in my twelfth year. There I learned a little bit about leadership and politics. I played football, and that gave me exercise and physical activity, and of course I was in the drama club, so between one to two hours per week working in the role of student body President, having to meet with the principal and assistant principal on different issues and student groups, I learned something about negotiation and dealing with people. (President Thomas Interview 1 of 3)

President Thomas then goes deeper to describe how his childhood experiences in football taught him lessons on leadership and perseverance that translated into academic success. President Thomas recalls:

> But oddly enough, as I have said many times, I learned most about competitiveness as a football player. My football coach taught me more about what I could do or what I could endure than any classroom. Later when the going got tough in Biology or Chemistry, which were my majors in undergraduate school, I thought about my football days and went back to work. I never accepted the fact that I could not do something. I always said I would go down trying and that gave me the will to keep going forward. (President Thomas Interview 1 of 3)

Here President Thomas discusses his philosophy of perseverance stating, "I would go down trying and that gave me the will to keep going forward." This mindset helped him to conceptualize challenges as opportunities. Research finds such patterns of youth leadership, may inform one's conception of leadership as an adult. Cross (1999) writes:

> After adolescence, the general personality and social identity profiles for human beings become well established, taking on very distinct patterns. If a person exhibited neurotic tendencies, at earlier points in development, continuation of this pattern in early adulthood is likely to result in a neurotic classification as an adult. (p.41)

President Thomas' "keep going forward" youthful mindset helped him to embrace challenges as opportunities. This relates to *buffering*, the third contributing function of Black identity found in the narrative data.

The Buffering Function: Translating Challenges into Opportunities

President Thomas was born in the 1930s and spent his childhood in the legally segregated American South. His experience with segregation, discrimination, and racial prejudice was overt and painful. However, President Thomas developed strategies to avoid being engulfed by the pain and unfairness of segregation and racism. President Thomas established a positive *buffering* function of his Black identity, which blocked out racial attacks. Cross, et al, (1999) describes this enactment of Black identity as *buffering*. *Buffering* is the conceptualization of ideas and attitudes that create psychological protection from everyday racism, cultivating an ability to filter out racist information, and to let nonracist experiences, relationships, transactions and opportunities flow through. For example President Thomas recalls a buffering experience in his childhood:

> Oddly enough the whites in that community lived in close proximity and we played together and got along very well. The only time we were separated was 11 O'clock on Sunday morning at church service, or the public schools, or the theater where they had a White only theater and Black only theater. But here again those things happened but nobody made a big issue of it. The water fountain downtown at the courthouse, had White on one side colored on the other, the restrooms had White and colored. But it was much a pattern of what people where doing around there that it wasn't questioned. (President Thomas Interview 1 of 3)

This experience relates to Cross' construct of *buffering*. Cross writes, "buffering prepares one for racist encounters, leading to greater personal control" (p.31). President Thomas says "it was

much a pattern of what people were doing," to describe the collective racial filter of his Black

community which established psychological buffers to endure segregation. Thus, President

Thomas was prepared for racism and instead of becoming mentally crippled by of segregation

and becoming angry, fearful, distant, or entering a depressive state. Conversely, President

Thomas was able to block out racist attacks and hate crimes from impacting his everyday

psychology. In another pivotal life story, set in the 1950s, President Thomas describes

experiencing overt hate crimes, while working to desegregate a predominantly White higher

education system in the South. President Thomas recalls:

> Whites drove my household into an explosion, by calling and telling us to go back to
> Africa and take all of them niggers with us. My phone rang every hour, we had to unlist
> the phone. People would throw garbage in my yard. They would load my yard with
> garbage in the middle of the night, throw rotten eggs and everything. My daughter was in
> high school and they would puncture her tires. But many whites also came in support.
> (President Thomas interview 1 of 3)

Here, President Thomas recalls a litany of racist experiences from White people in the South but

ends the litany saying "but many whites also came in support" (President Thomas interview 1 of

3). The order and process of his recollection relates to the research on buffering out racist

information while letting non racist experiences flow through. President Thomas closed this

pivotal life story on hate crimes he experienced with a statement on the positive flow of support

from whites stating, "but many whites also came in support" (President Thomas interview 1 of

3).

A third buffering experience, which exemplifies this inner quality of psychological

security and existential serendipity in the face of overt racism, can be found in President

Thomas's story about his first doctoral student experience. Here he responded to the personal

recommendation of a White male colleague, who was also the Dean of a well-respected White

medical school in the Midwest. Mr. Thomas was accepted into a predominately White medical

school in the South. The entire school had only a handful of Black students and most of these

students were in the law school. Upon Mr. Thomas physically showing up to the campus his

referral and acceptance quickly turned into racial rejection. Confronted with the dilemma of

being denied because of his race President Thomas operationalized what could be described as a

buffering function of his Black identity. President Thomas recalls:

> My chief surgeon Curtis Arnold (a white male) was Dean of the medical school at State
> University of the Midwest. That was his civilian role. He had been drafted back in; he
> was in the officers' reserve. But Curtis kept telling me that I should go to medical school,
> so he said when I was discharged "as Dean, I'm admitting you to State University of the
> Midwest. So I want you to get ready to go in January", and I told him that my wife was in
> the South and I wanted to come back to the South. So he called Ronald who was Dean of
> the medical school at Lower South Lilly PWI at that time, and Ronald assured him that if
> I would come to Lower South Lilly, I would be given an opportunity to study medicine.
>
> When I arrived in Lower South Lilly, they didn't know I was Black until I got there. I got
> there and sat out in the outer office about four or five hours, and people kept running in
> and out of the Dean's office and they would all look at me when they went in and would
> look at me again when they came out. So I knew they were talking about me, because I
> wasn't that curious looking that people had to stare at me like that. So I said, "utt oh,
> something is wrong here". And I kept asking the secretary, "Will the Dean be able to see
> me?" She said, "He knows you're here. He's working on you."
>
> So you have to realize, at that time only the medical school and only the law school had a
> Blacks in it. The law school had seven Blacks in it. Well, nothing on the campus was
> integrated. We couldn't eat in the dining halls, we couldn't go to the football games, and
> we couldn't do anything outside of the medical school and the law school. Well, the two
> Blacks who had been admitted to the medical school couldn't do anything but that, so
> they sent me to John Bigwigary (a white male), President of Lower South Lilly PWI.
> That's how I met John Bigwigary, who later became my boss and made me a vice
> President for the whole system. Bigwigary had me to his home; he wouldn't talk to me at
> his office. He said this is a conversation we had to have away from his office. So we went
> to his home and sat at this long table. He sat on one end, I sat at the other. His maid
> brought me some ice cream and cookies, and so after we got through eating, I knew. I
> could hardly swallow my ice cream and didn't know why this big President was meeting
> with me and serving me ice cream and cookies after they told me I wouldn't be admitted.
> He said, "Young man, you come highly recommended and I'm delighted that you are
> here, glad you chose to come back to the South. Because we need people like you in the
> South. You don't need to be in the Midwest I said, "uh huh." He said, "I tell you what
> now. You have grounds for a lawsuit." He says, "You know I'm a lawyer, but I'm going

to ask you something. If the Dean offers you a job supervising the research component in biochemistry and places you in the top category for admissions to medical school within the next two years, will you be alright?" I say, "Well, if I file a lawsuit, how much time do you think that will take before I can get some money?" He said, "Oh, two or three years at the most". He said, "But think about your total career. Why get a check for one day when you can get an experience that can go a lifetime?"

So that was the kind of conversation we had and I don't think he cared that much for me personally, because he didn't even know me. He was just doing what he had to do as President. He chose to do that. He didn't have to do it. So I went home and thought about it, and I said, "I'm going to profit from this experience and see where it takes me. I'm going to gamble with it."

Here, in the face of structural racism, President Thomas chose to take the job and allow positive interactions to flow through. This can be seen as a *buffering* reaction to a challenging racist experience which catapulted him into an opportunity. Instead of making a knee jerk reaction, President Thomas "went home and thought about it," then he later decides, "I'm going to profit from this experience". This experience led President Thomas to build relationships, which later contributed to becoming a long-term HBCU President. The buffering function of Black identity creates a psychological filter to mitigate racist interactions, while allowing nonracist interactions to flow through (Cross, Strauss, and Fhagen-Smith, 1999). I learned from President Thomas that the Black community at times was his mental respite where he would run for group identification and solace. This directly relates to *bonding,* the fourth function of Black identity found in the data.

The Bonding Function: Experience Building Black Organizations

Strong organizational leadership at HBCUs was important to President Thomas. Discuss HBCUs leaders he expressed a formative view of leadership in which life experience was the master tutor. He stated:

Those different experiences that you have over the years contributes significantly to your preparation for leadership, or administration because if you just sit and work from theory,

I say you are going to have a learning curve [a difficult learning experience]. (President Thomas Interview 2 of 3)

It was clear to President Thomas that his success as a long-term HBCU President did not come from his academic credentials, but from his experiences building relationships and forming teams. Cross et al, (1999) describes this as the *bonding* function of Black identity. It is "the degree to which the person derives meaning and support from an affiliation with or attachment to Black people and Black culture". (p.31)

The following story details President Thomas' fortuitous rise to his first of three presidencies and how his experience of ultimately joining a Black team led to becoming a HBCU President. President Thomas recalls:

> I knew Rusty Mill, when I was at (Nearby HBCU) that year. I ate my meals at Rusty Mill's mother's house. Rusty Mill was a student at a PWI in New Berry in Theology. Bob Mill, his brother, was in a California PWI in law school. So I would talk to them quite often when they came home or help his mother to help get them home, and we would just sit and talk. Well, when he became President of Lower South Faith HBCU, he called me and asked me if I would come up and try to raise some money through research, to help at Lower South Faith HBCU. So I told him no, because I was drawing about $19,000 a year from my salary and I had a couple of National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants that I was working with. So he offered me $6,000 a year to come to Lower South Faith HBCU. I said, "Rusty, you've got to be joking, man." He said, "I'm only making $13,000 a year as President." He said Lenny, who was Dean of Instruction, was making $4,000. I said, "Lord, have mercy. How do you get these people, those people are crazy." So anyway, I ended up being crazy… after we talk three or four times, and he kept saying "if you come you won't regret it" and blah blah blah, "you need to give something to humanity" and blah blah, put all that theological talk on me. So I agreed to come, and I was glad I did, because it was a young group with new ideas and they were trying to make things better and I enjoyed it. I regretted when he left and went to Ebony Ivy HBCU. And then Bob, his brother, left the next month and went to Eastern HBCU. And that's when they put me in the interim role at Lower South Faith HBCU until they could find a President. I was Dean when they left because Bob was vice President of academic affairs and I was under Bob. I was Dean of faculty, so I got promoted straight up overnight as they walked out and I stayed there.

Here President Thomas recalls leaving a higher paying job for something that meant more to him than money. He states, "I agreed to come, and I was glad I did, because it was a young [HBCU]

group with new ideas and they were trying to make things better [for Black people in higher education] and I enjoyed it." What attracted him to leave a higher paying job was *bonding*. This bonding function of Black identity tugged at the recondite fiber of President Thomas' heart to serve at an HBCU for less compensation. President Thomas says he "ended up being crazy" and reflects, "I was glad I did, because it was a young group with new ideas and they were trying to make things better and I enjoyed it". President Thomas' decision to choose to sacrifice and invest in a Black HBCU team and receive less compensation speaks to the power of the *bonding* function of Black identity. It also speaks to the special nature and missions of HBCUs which attract people who could get paid more in exchange for the bonding which can occur in majority Black spaces (Calmore, 1995).

The four functions of Black identity found in President Thomas' life story were: bridging, individualism, buffering, and bonding. The following table depicts how each function of Black identity was identified in the data and relates to each corresponding theoretical framework.

Table 8: Functions of Black Identity Found in President Thomas' Life Story

Function of Black Identity Found in Data	Data Collection Method and Reference
(Cross, et al 1999) Bridge function: Bi-or multi-cultural competence refers to those competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that make it possible for a Black person to immerse himself or herself in another groups experience, absent of a need to suppress one's sense of Blackness (p.31)	One-on-one interview • ARMY Experience with best friends who were White males
(Cross, et al 1999) Individualism: Youth leadership experience, the expression of one's unique personality, in accord with the whims and dictates of the unique aspects of one's self-concept. (p.33)	One-on-one interview • Valedictorian • Senior class President • President of the student body • Football player
(Cross, et al 1999) Buffering: Translating challenges into opportunities, ideas and attitudes that	One-on-one interview • Acceptance then racial rejection

create psychological protection from everyday racism, an ability, to filter out racist information, and to let nonracist experiences, relationships, transactions and opportunities flow through". (p.31)	from medical school based • Segregation in public accommodations • Hate crimes
(Cross, et al 1999) Bonding: Experience building Black organizations and programs, the degree to which the person derives meaning and support from an affiliation with or attachment to Black people and Black culture. (p.31)	One-on-one interview • Joining the staff of an HBCU for less money because he believed in the team concept of building Black Universities.

Black Leadership Typology of *Accommodation* Versus *Protest*

The foundational literature on Black leadership in America heavily references the typology framework of Myrdal (1944). Myrdal presents a dichotomous typology of *accommodation* versus *protest*. Myrdal describes the Black *accommodation* leader as an individual who serves as a go between representative for Blacks within a racist environment. Myrdal writes, "The Negroes need a person to establish contact with the influential people in the White group. They need Negro leaders who can talk to, and get things from, the whites" (p. 721). Myrdal describes the Black *protest* leader as an individual who does not conform to the system of racial hierarchy. Rather the Black *protest* leader seeks to disrupt the system of racial hierarchy and replace it with an alternative system.

In Myrdal's pre-civil rights movement analysis, he describes *accommodation* leadership as the only viable type of Black leadership given the social realities. Myrdal's limited view of the complexities and variances of Black protest did not foreshadow the powerful acts of mass nonviolent protest that sprung to life in the 1960s. Despite these limitations, Myrdal's typology remains a good starting point for historical analysis of Black leadership. Myrdal's *accommodation* versus *protest* construct provides a sensitizing lens for discussing how Black leaders interact with other Black people and Black issues.

Stories of both *accommodation* and *protest*, found in President Thomas' life speak to the careful navigation or tight roping Black leaders enact. President Thomas recalled his conversation with a powerful White college President where he was presented with the choice of accommodating the White quota or protesting through legal action. The White college President in essence asked a young adult Mr. Thomas are you going to accommodate racism or protest. President Bigwigary states:

 "I tell you what now. You have grounds for a lawsuit." He says, "You know I'm a lawyer, but I'm going to ask you something. If the Dean offers you a job supervising the research component in biochemistry and places you in the top category for admissions to medical school within the next two years, will you be alright?"

In this instance President Thomas chose to *accommodate* instead of *protest*. In another instance President Thomas describes his time in the Army as one, which helped him to become a man, and position him to *protest* when he returned from the war. President Thomas recalls:

World War II scared the hell out of the White man, when the Negro soldier went off to war in 1941 as a Negro boy and came back in 1945 as a Black man. When he was a boy he would work at the service station changing tires and say 'yessir'. Then he got drafted. I am no longer Spencer Thomas I'm private Jones (poking out his chest as he narrates) Now I'm Sargent Spencer Thomas…I'm a man…
     So when I get back home, with my uniform on, I get off the train in South Carolina then they say "look here boy you go around to the back if you want to get a hamburger you don't come to the front door here." And I say, "No mister, I'm not going to the back door I'm going to the front door and I'm going to get me a hamburger". Then they arrest me, Well, that happened over and over in 1944 and it happened so many times them White folks said "well we can't put them niggers back in no can again they are out of control". And they started changing things.

Here President Thomas chose to be arrested rather then supporting the racist social order. He displays what Cornel West would describe as *political courage* and puts himself at personal risk for the cause of the the collective good of the Black community. These actions align with what Cornell West would describe as a race-transcending prophetic leader who acts in "courageous defiance" to racism (West, 1999). President Thomas also referenced what Tryman calls the

Black masses and mass protest in his statement "Well, that happened over and over in 1944 and it happened so many times them White folks said, well we can't put them niggers back in no can again they are out of control."

Here the data found in President Thomas' narrative supports research by Black scholars Tryman (1976) and West (1999) who suggest a continuum of Black leadership types exist where Black leaders carefully navigate elements of White accommodation and Black protest for the collective needs of the Black community, or for self interest.

An important aspect of President Thomas' life was the support he received from the Black community, and specifically Lower South Faith HBCU. The supportive HBCU environment was so powerful to President Thomas he conceptualize these spaces as his family. Later in life after he retired from his third presidency he chose to return to Lower South Faith HBCU as an adjunct professor. He felt he needed to give back to the family that helped shape and mold his success.

President Thomas defined this fashioning of collective identity as family. President Thomas states:

> The most effective way of coping is togetherness and family, and family may be defined by anybody who listens to you, your family might not be your wife, or your husband, or brother, or sister, or mother, or father it might be the guy next door or the lady up the street, who ever can sit down and be interested in you to talk about what you want to talk about, that's what's important, what you want to talk about, because you don't want to talk about what you don't want to talk about, so I define family that way.

Summary

In seeking to better understand why and how Dr. Thomas became a long-term HBCU President I learned about how he used functions of Black identity as tools in his success. Dr. Thomas, like most Black people, has a complex and dynamic identity. He was able to positively use bridging,

individualism, buffering, and bonding functions of Black identity to open doors and win friendships.

Ultimately President Thomas, both embraced and rejected the dominant social order. His life story contained examples of *accommodation* and *protest*. His identity reference point was not only race, but also included a loosely knit definition of family, which comprised a team of multi-racial people from which he could find germane conversation. President Thomas states, "who ever can sit down and be interested in you to talk about what you want to talk about, that's what's important." President Thomas chose to serve the missions of HBCUs, this was one of the ways in which he displayed his commitment to the *Black masses* (Tryman 1977; West 1999).

Chapter 5. The Life of President Smith

Introduction

To better understand the life of President Smith I sat down with him at his office for a series of in-depth interviews. It was there that President Smith talked about his life story. My time with President Smith taught me how he enacted Black identity to block out racism, develop inter-racial allies, bond with other Black people, and lead as a youth. His experiences aligned with four Black identity functions identified in Nigresence research: *buffering, individualism, bridging,* and *bonding* (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith 1999; Cross et al, 2012). Identity functions can be positive or negative and can be honed overtime to yield positive results. Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999) write,

> It might be helpful to give one negative and one positive example. Persons who are self-hating and alienated from both black and white people may have paranoiac racial filters (buffering to the extreme), shallow connections to other Black people (weak bonding or a pattern of internalized racism)…Persons who use all [four] operations in a positive manner, may buffer selectively, negating any need for rigid identity shield (buffering); may partake in any number of Black cultural events that sustain and affirm their connection to other Black people and Black institutions (bonding); [and] may have long standing and deeply felt transracial friendships (bridging). (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith 1999 p. 34)

These four constructs from Nigresence research helps to structure this discussion on the identity functions seen in the interview data from President Smith as teachable life stories. The discussion will begin by covering the four Black identity functions identified in President

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Smith's life story. These are important because they give us a glimpse of the identity and

leadership qualities of President Smith. Then I will discuss President Smith's Black leadership

experiences and how they relate to the *accommodation* vs. *protest* typology (Myrdal, 1994).

The Bridging Function: the use of Bi-or Multi-Cultural Competence

President Smith used the *bridging* function of Black identity to navigate racist environments. For

President Smith his sojourn to HBCU leadership was in part enabled by his intellectual

navigation of a doctoral thesis at a PWI, which examined the controversial topics of race,

inequity, and economics. President Smith recalls,

> So I decided to do [my dissertation] on the theory of economic discrimination… my
> whole argument was [that] the failure of markets to achieve the conditions of perfect
> competition is what allows for the persistence of discrimination as a profitable outcome
> for White folks. So I went to my professor [a White male], who was my advisor at that
> time and said I want to write my dissertation on the theory of discrimination. He said,
> "Smith, you can't do that." I said, "Why not?" He said, "You're Black; you can't be
> objective." He said, "If you want to write on the theory of discrimination, you need to use
> the cases of Eskimos and discrimination against Eskimos, because you can be more
> objective about that." So I said, "that's funny, now, correct me if I'm wrong,
> discrimination involves two groups in our country—the White group and the Black
> group. Why is it that the White group can be objective and the Black group cannot?" He
> couldn't do anything; his argument was shot to smithereens. So I said, "Besides, I want to
> get an understanding that will help me to resolve these differences and disparities and let
> us move on to creating policy, so why would I want to be biased? I want the closest to the
> objective truth that I can get, because otherwise we don't have anything to base efforts to
> change things on. It's no advantage to me to do a biased topic, what is that going to do?"
> So anyway they let me do it. (President Smith Interview 1 of 3)

Here President Smith used positivist academic reasoning and research protocols to communicate

across race, class, and culture. President Smith argues, "discrimination involves two

groups…why is it that the White group can be objective and the Black group cannot." President

Smith's use of reasoning to create a inter-racial bridge may be interpreted as the *bridging*

function of Black identity. As a researcher seeking to learn from his *bridging* experience it

compelled me to reflexively examine how I (a Black male researcher) can utilize similar functional tools to encourage my research to transcend race and class. During a later follow-up interview President Smith expounds and uses this cross-cultural bridging experience as a teaching tool, stating:

> The only thing I can say to brothers [or Black people] is what I have always said to them, you've got to be honest you have got to be yourself you gotta be able to hold your own, you have got to know what you are doing, and you have got to be able to battle, you can't get discouraged easily so I think if you have something you believe in and its obvious that you are going to fight for it you are not about to give up your belief system because somebody else doesn't like it, they will eventually come around. The gentleman who was always trying to undo my beliefs and tried to get me to see it from his prospective, eventually he came around too and as I said *we became good friends* (Italics added for emphasis). I did not yield I stayed consistent with what I believed in, and I was able to articulate it, demonstrate it and, prove it scientifically, there was no emotion involved in the sense that I wasn't looking for an outcome that favored my position but I was looking for the truth. If they believe your position is solved they are compelled by the protocol they follow to accept it. A scientist is a scientist so you are putting forth a scientific premise, which you are establishing by widely accepted views of proof. They are compelled to accept that. That's why you have to know you are correct, you have to establish your position, you have to defend your position, and have objective evidence to support your position. You have to develop that inner voice that tells you when you are right or wrong. David Riceman talked about inner-directed and outer-directed people. Most people are outer-directed, that is they look for external validation, external approval. But inner-directed people get approval from within, and those are the people who can do things accomplish things and create original theories. You've got to be inner-directed, based on reality, your belief, and your mastery of whatever protocols you need to establish the validity of what you are doing. (President Smith Interview 3 of 3)

Here President Smith describes one of the ways in which he used the *bridging* function of Black identity to become "friends," with a White male professor with different cultural views. President Smith became fluent in the language of the academy and presented his argument using widely accepted protocols. As Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999) write, individuals who develop the *bridging* function of Black identity are, "able to immerse oneself in the other person's social construction of reality, while never losing site of one's point of departure" (p.32). In another life story experience President Smith articulates an anti-racist philosophy that may

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have helped him to form authentic inter-racial friendships in an era of high racial tensions (Alexander, 2012). In the following selection President Smith recalls his experience with deficit model teaching in public schools, the Black power movement, and the Black Muslims. President Smith concludes with an anti-racist philosophy that all people are "reform-able". President Smith recalls:

Most of the [Black] parents had migrated to the North. They were not highly educated from the South. A lot of them were from rural areas. They felt their job was to dress their kid up, clean 'em up and send 'em to school. They thought the teachers in school were taking care of their kids. They didn't realize how the teachers in school were messing their kids up and not educating. That's why in my opinion in the North we started integration… in the South, you had all the marches trying to break down segregation and the South was demanding integration… the North was demanding community control. They had learned that integrated schools were not good… but while the South had never been integrated, so they were demanding integration. The North was demanding Black teachers… now it turns out that getting Black teachers was not an automatic answer either, because some of them also didn't have a lot of respect for underclass Black kids.

We got our minds messed up, bought the inferiority business. I remember when I was growing up, if anybody called you Black those were fighting words. Nobody dare call me Black… you was fighting. Black people were embarrassed about Black, they were embarrassed about color, they were embarrassed to mention slavery. Believe it or not, Black people would not eat chocolate ice cream. They were embarrassed to ask for chocolate; they wanted vanilla ice cream. They had been so conditioned that Black was bad that they didn't want anybody talking about Black when they were around White people. They slumped, they felt inferior, and that's really what was going on. That's why people like Malcolm and the [Black] Panthers and the Muslims—that's why they had such a strong emphasis on Black pride and Black power. Because Blacks had been taught that Black was bad. That was a very liberating movement for most of us. From the early '60s through the early '70s—and believe it or not, people like Muhammad Ali, with his big mouth and his braggadocio attitude in your face that said to all those White people, "Yeah, I'm Black, and I'm always going to be Black." You'd had to be there to see how they'd respond to Muhammad Ali… So there was a lot of controversy in the North about Martin Luther King (MLK), who is a great hero now. But at that time, a lot of people felt MLK was a wimp. You know, we wanted to fight. We wanted to get the guns, we wanted to go to war. Of course, it was stupid.

And the thing about Malcolm—well, I heard Farrakhan more than I did Malcolm—Malcolm wasn't around at that time he got shot. When Farrakhan would come, [he was] solid. First thing was, those guys were so intellectual and could make such an argument, persuasive reasoning, that if you thought you were kind of revolutionary, you always wanted to hear them speak. But Farrakhan would tell the

people, these Muslims and stuff, "What are y'all talking about? They got jets, aircraft carriers, jet planes, how are you going to fight that Army?" You know Farrakhan was not—the Muslims were never into outright war, they were into avoiding those battles, building your own economic strength, building your own educational strength. And [that was] the reason why… I messed around trying to affiliate with the Muslims. At one time, I went low haircut. I wore the stuff, I sold the newspaper. So I was in the suburbs, a professor at Willowtree University (a PWI) [while] selling the [Nation of Islam] newspaper, selling bean pies, and I had a bunch of customers that used to love for me to come by because they wanted to talk that stuff, revolution. *But I couldn't sign the pledge that I believed that White people were inherently devils, and I just couldn't bring myself to do that. I always want to believe that everybody is reform-able, everyone can be transformed* (italics for emphasis). I understood intellectually why they said that, because Blacks had such a sense of inferiority and such a sense of wanting to join with the whites, they said that to cut that out and force Blacks to have to work for themselves, build up their own resources, and not look to whites for liberation. It had that purpose. I knew that, but still I couldn't do it.

President Smith stopped short of joining the Black Muslims because he, "couldn't sign the pledge that I believed that White people were inherently devils." His anti-racist philosophy exemplifies *bridging* and the potential for inter-racial relationships, transactions, and opportunities. The lesson I learned from President Smith's anti-racist philosophy is that inter-racial transactions require hope in the other person. This authentic hope in people stretches past the act of *code-switching* (or fronting), which may involve deception, manipulation, and accommodation.

President Smith would later use inter-racial *bridging* tools to advocate for anti-racist policy and fundraising for HBCUs. President Smith's path toward becoming an HBCU President began as a youth. President Smith's leadership experiences in young adulthood can also be viewed as the *individualism* function of Black identity.

The Individualism Function: Youth Leadership Experiences

President Smith is a unique leader. His individual ideas on 'fairness,' are a characteristic of

leadership he cultivated in his youth. President Smith recalls,

> I remember at a young age I was very conscious of justice, fairness, and equity. Even when I was three or four years old, I could detect inequity, and I was always opposed to unfairness. I thought everyone should be treated fairly. That was just part of my nature. (President Smith Interview 1 of 3)

President Smith recalls observing the inequitable system of patriarchy in farming labor roles. He

states,

> They had a hierarchy that was very discriminatory against women. Adult women did what they called "strain" the tobacco. They payed $.25 an hour. The children where what they called "handers"—they bundled the tobacco and would hand it to the women so the women could strain it. Then, they would strain it and hang it on this long stick. So they could take it to the tobacco barn where it would be cured. So they would pack one barn after another. The teenage boys or the boys who were hard workers have one of two jobs. They drove what they called "drags," which was a sled behind mules that they drove through the rows where there were adult men who were called "croppers." So the adult man would pick the ripe leaves off the stalks, put them in these drags, and the boys would drive them back to the barn to take the tobacco out in piles for each lady so they could string it. (President Smith Interview 1 of 3)

President Smith's observation of a, "hierarchy that was very discriminatory against women,"

shows his unique ability to see unfairness within the patriarchal environment of his childhood.

This quality of a consciousness of "justice, fairness, and equity," made President Smith unique as

a youth and helped him to function as an "inner-directed[9]" leader.

Another example of the *individualism* function seen in youth leadership experiences is

when President Smith identified himself as a young entrepreneur or a "hustling little boy", with a

strong work ethic. President Smith recalls:

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[9] **Inner-directed,** President Smith defines this term stating, "people who get approval from within…those are the people who can do things accomplish things and create original theories" (President Smith Interview 3 of 3).

> I was a hustling little boy. I knew where a lot of blackberry patches were in Benettsville. And we would put them in these quart jars and I used to sell them to the White people, then take some home to my grandmother, who used to can them. I used to know where lots of wild pear and wild peach orchards were, and I went and picked those. We used to glean at the corn and grits mill. The corn would be sent to the mill by the farmers to be shed off the cobs and they would make cornmeal out of it. Well, the machines that shed it didn't get all the corn off of it, so we used to find the piles that had corn on it, put it in big bags, and bring it back to my grandmother. She'd peel the corn off it, and we would take it back to the corn mill and get grits and meal. I sold the *Pittsburgh Courier* (a Black newspaper)—at that time they shipped it all over. So they shipped it from Pittsburgh to Bennettsville. So I would run a paper route and, believe it or not, I sold some *Pittsburgh Couriers* to White people. I guess they wanted to know what Black people were doing. My grandmother had a little cosmetic business, so I was her order-collecting and order-delivering guy. It was really [just] me and not my older brother. But I tell you, I never once resented it. I never felt anybody was imposing or anything on me. I never felt I shouldn't be doing it. It seemed like… well, it needs to be done. I chopped my share of wood, I raked my share of yards, filled my share of chickens. We worked. We worked all the time.

Here President Smith's description of youth entrepreneurship, hard work, and a non-resentful work mindset were all qualities that continued into his young adult leadership activities. These hard work youth leadership qualities made President Smith unique, and were operations of what Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999), call the *individualism* function of Black identity. Tied to President Smith's individualism was a self-confidence in his intellectual abilities that encouraged him to volunteer for leadership roles in the Army. In the following selection President Smith describes how he became the young leader of his Alpha team in basic training:

> When we got there, we were on these buses. They pull us up, a bunch of people from 17 to 21. They pull us up and you don't know what to expect, you've got your uniform and your duffle bag and you are sitting on this bus. And this sergeant got on, he had on this helmet with a red stripe around it, it's shiny, he is creased to the T, he had spit-shine boots, and he was looking tough and mean. And he had a little swagger stick, a little stick where he would swing it up and down, and he'd walk up and down the bus, and he looks us over. And then he goes to the bus driver and says, "Are these my troops?" And the bus driver says, "Yes, sergeant." The sergeant said, "What a sorry bunch of mutherfuckers they are," and starts screaming, "Off the bus! Off the bus! Off the bus!" He chases us off the bus, and you are trying to get your duffle bag but you don't know which one is yours. He says, "What are you here for! Get em up! Get em up!" One guy stopped and put his

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bag across his shoulder, and he wacked him across that bag and knocked him down. Then he said, "Who the fuck told you to take a break! Get up!" …I guess because I was a volunteering, crazy little 17-year-old they made me a team leader. And I had a little stripe. So I was with the Alpha team in the 4th Platoon, and every team had duties. My squad's duties were to clean the latrine. At first you had to get your team up early, 4 o'clock. Get dressed, do your duties. Man that was a pain, because some of them guys did not want to get up. You ended up having to do the work they didn't do. So I was pretty mad about that. I remember one time, I dumped a whole bucket of water on a guy who wouldn't get up. I was mad with that guy, but we got through it.

Serving as team leader at such a young age shows the *individualism* function of Black identity.

President Smith's enactment of *individualism*, as a youth, helped to prepare him for his future as

a long-term HBCU president. However in order for a Black man in America to reach the highest

level of academic leadership, President Smith would also need to positively use the *buffering*

function to block out discriminatory experiences.

The Buffering Function: Translating Challenges into Opportunities

President Smith describes the *buffering* function as a mindset taught to him by his grandmother.

President Smith recalls:

> I've had plenty of experiences with racism and discrimination. You have to be inner-directed. You never give them… or raise them to the level of standard to where they can hurt you. They are just people…It may hurt, yes it is unfair that people aren't fair and just. You don't let it bother you, you keep on going. My grandmother taught us that you don't even go out looking for any approval or approbation. You do your best all the time. That ole motto 'once a task has begun never leave it till its done, be it great or be it small do it well or not at all'.

Here President Smith's grandmother teaches hims the lesson of *buffering* stating, "don't let it

bother you." Her statement symbolizes a psychological *buffer* that blocks out racist interactions,

while allowing nonracist actions to flow through. In antoher example, President Smith described

a childhood experience where he faced racist insults that cut deeply and were aimed at his

mother's disease.

President Smith recalls:

> So when we moved there, I don't think my mother was with the family more than two weeks before she vanished on another one of those alcoholic binges. She would come home on occasions and then we would be looking for her. I was already shy about being in this all-White class. And then being in this all-White class in a small town with an alcoholic mother that everybody in town was saying, "Those niggers down there, they got an alcoholic mother." I remember distinctly in fourth grade at Christmas time, they had a grab bag where you pick out someones name. Someone got my name and I got someone else's name. The other kid gave me a flashlight for my Christmas gift and said, "So you could look for your mother." That's the way it was.

This painful experience was seared into President Smith's memory. Over six decades later he could describe it as if it had just happened. However, President Smith ends his recollection with the statement "that's the way it was." Here the ending statement of this memory could seen as a *buffering* function of Black identity. This relates to how President Thomas described the colored only water fountains and restrooms, when he said "but it was much of a pattern of what people where doing" (President Thomas interview 1 of 3).

In the next selection President Smith describes two different types of White male academics he encountered during his academic career, "hacks" and "exceptional individuals". The first type the, "hack" is described as not a "true intellectual" who is threatened by a, "nigger" who is more knowledgable. The "hack" is the type of White male academic who is blocked by the *buffering* function of Black identity, while the "exceptional individual" is not blocked. President Smith recalls:

> You may have some hacks who are not true intellectuals and they may be in positions of authority. That may make it even harder with them because you are a threat to them, they may say 'here is a Black man or nigger who knows more than me', that's a threat that's not supposed to happen. So they try to put threats away.

The second type of White male intellect President Smith describes is an, "exceptional

individual," these types of interactions and transactions are allowed to flow through the *buffering*

function. President Smith recalls:

> He (a white male professor) was an exceptional individual who had no axes to grind, he
> was established and was about as high in the discipline as you can get, so he was straight
> forward and honest and believed in the intellectual [pursuit], and he operated by what he
> viewed was the truth he wasn't trying to be politically correct nor was he trying to do
> anything to hold Blacks back.

Here President Smith articulates how his internal typology of White academics informs his use

of the *buffering* function in cross-cultural interactions. This is the type of mental juggling that

may be required in predominately White institutions. Later in life President Smith chose to leave

this environment in favor of the *bonding,* which may occur at HBCUs.

The Bonding Function: Building Black Organizations and Programs

For President Smith the concept of bonding relates to his fond memories of a closely knit yet

crowded extended family as a youth. President Smith recalls:

> I stayed with my mother's cousin, who had twelve kids, so this house was crowded. The
> father did construction, so he was a tough guy, but he was almost never there. My cousin
> had a little prayer at dinnertime and said, "Bless the food. Bless the house. He who is the
> fastest gets the most." That was how it was—didn't have a regular 'everybody come to
> dinner now,' you got in and got what you could get. But I enjoyed it there. In fact, I'm
> still fairly close to those cousins. They came to my inauguration and wedding. (President
> Smith interview 1 of 3)

Additionally, President Smith had an early conception of the importance of intra-race relations.

He recalls a cafeteria incident where sitting together depicted the *bonding* function of Black

identity. The following selection relates to the identity research of Beverly Tatum's (2003) book,

Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria:

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> When I went to the cafeteria, because all of my classes were with White kids, so I sat at the table with the kids I was going to class with. Then one day, one of the brothers said, "What, you think you are too good to sit with us? Why are you sitting over there with the White kids?" And I said, "I don't know, these are the kids in my class." But I started sitting with the brothers from then on. And I never found what people say from junior high school, that your peers pulled you down and didn't want you to do well. That never happened to me. My peers always wanted me to do well, and they were always proud that I could compete with and beat out the White kids. So they supported me, but I think it was because I didn't think I was better than them. I didn't look down on them, you know. I was a regular guy. I could go there, but I could do the dance and do the grind 'em up dance, too. I played ball on the courts, I could box around a little bit. You can't really win their respect if you are a nerd, you just can't, but I was never taught that. (President Smith interview 1 of 3)

This integrated schooling experience forced a young President Smith to choose racial sides at the cafeteria table. Tatum (2003) finds that important Black identity work occurs at the school cafeteria table, where Black children develop positive conceptions of Blackness.

Additionally, President Smith described another early schooling experience in a racially isolated rural setting. In this all Black educational settings President Smith recalls:

> In Bennetsville, we were taught the smart guys were supposed to be the leaders. Not only in the classroom. They are supposed to be the leaders at everything, which is a whole tradition of royalty that Cain[10] was supposed to be better than everybody else. [Academically], I could do it. And I always had the motivation to do it. And the drive came from all the things with the family, and my father was very much into education and had very high standards, and even if he was not doing what he was supposed to do, we better bring A's home, so that was the expectation. It was the expectation from my [Black] teachers in Bennetsville, from the community, that you did your best.

Here President Smith recalls his childhood in both majority Black and majority White school settings. The experiences of *bonding* in all Black educational settings as a youth relates to his later administrative practices where bonding was at the heart of the faculty culture. In the

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[10] Biblical reference found in Genesis chapter 4, referring to a sibling rivalry for God's favorable view on sacrifice.

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following quote President Smith describes why some of his faculty, have chosen to leave the

PWI environment in favor of a Black educational *bonding* experience. President Smith states:

> [Black faculty] come here (to the HBCU) not just for money, a lot of people come here because they like being in this kind of environment and this kind of institution. Now we are attracting on paper some fairly qualified people because they want to be in this kind of an environment. Some of them are coming over from your institutions (PWIs), they are saying 'I'm tired of it (racist environments). You have to be careful how you determine who is the best of the best. A lot of the folks who have gotten degrees from the quote 'best schools,' are not really committed to Black things anymore. They are some of the main ones fighting to end Black colleges, so you can't just go by credentials you have got to go by what's in the heart also. One of my questions I always ask in interviews is, "why do you want to come here?" and they say the right things. "I believe in HBCUs I want to help Black kids," most of them mean it some of them don't, some of them are coming here just to get a job, but they don't typically last that long.

President Smith's life story is filled with a plethora of powerful experiences that contributed to

his becoming a long-term HBCU President. Within the cornucopia of experiences that catalyzed

President Smith's success four functions of Black identity were identified as patterns in the data.

These four identity functions are *bridging*, *individualism*, *buffering*, and *bonding*. These

functions of Black identity contributed to President Smith's navigation of life as a Black man in

an oppressive society. The following table links the identity functions seen as patterns in the

transcript data collected from President Smith's life story.

Table 9: Functions of Black Identity Found in President Smith's' Life Story

Function of Black Identity Found in Data	Data Collection Method and Reference
(Cross, et al 1999) Bridge function: Bi-or multi-cultural competence refers to those competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that make it possible for a Black person to immerse himself or herself in another groups experience, absent of a need to suppress one's sense of Blackness. (p.31)	One-on-one interview • Doctoral experience • Debate with White male professor • Anti-racist philosophy
(Cross, et al 1999) Individualism: Youth leadership experience, the expression of one's unique	One-on-one interview • Youth equity consciousness

personality, in accord with the whims and dictates of the unique aspects of one's self-concept. (p.33)	• Youth farming experience • Youth entrepreneurship experience • Young adult head of Alpha team
(Cross, et al 1999) Buffering: An ability to translate challenges into opportunities, ideas and attitudes that create psychological protection from everyday racism, an ability, to filter out racist information, and to let nonracist experiences, relationships, transactions and opportunities flow through. (p.31)	One-on-one interview • Grandmother's wisdom • Racist insults in school • Typology of hacks v. exceptional individuals
(Cross, et al 1999) Bonding: Experience building Black organizations and programs, the degree to which the person derives meaning and support from an affiliation with or attachment to Black people and Black culture. (p.31)	One-on-one interview • Crowded extended family house • Blacks sitting together in cafeteria • All Black learning environment • Black faculty choosing HBCUs

The data in President Smith's interviews help to construct a picture of how Black identity can function in the life of a Black leader. Myrdal's (1944) research on Black leadership typologies uses the constructs of *accommodation* versus *protest* to better understand how Black leaders act within an oppressive environment.

Black Leadership Typology of *Accommodation* Versus Protest

President Smith is a leader who carefully navigates both *accommodation* and *protest* in his leadership. President Smith has a history of *protesting* economic inequity as a researcher and *protesting* normative Eurocentric-framed grading policies as an administrator. However, President Smith's life showed the ability to use *accommodation* when galvanizing multi-racial local leaders to advance HBCU goals. In the following selection President Smith articulates his path to the presidency, which began as a Black researcher *protesting* economic inequity:

> I don't know that I chose it [becoming an HBCU President] it chose me. When I first became a Dean, I was pursuing economic reasons, I was writing articles I was testifying in congress, I was the main person who wrote continuously on the disparities between

Blacks and Whites, I would do [research] for the Urban League... But it was hard to get sustained funding to do research, and so when I first became Dean I said, 'well as Dean I would have some authority to establish research places that could fund this stuff. And then when I became President I said 'well as President I can determine some of what the University is going to do. Now it turns out that's not necessarily true, but you think it's going to be true, and it is true to a certain extent. Now there is a sacrifice for that, you don't get to do all your research and the intellectual stuff, you are caught up in practical everyday issues of keeping the place open, dealing with accreditations, hiring the right people firing the right people, raising the funds you need to raise and bonds and all this kind of junk, so yes I miss that I don't get a chance to be an intellectual, so that's a sacrifice, and that's just the way it goes, I'm going to be able to retire one day hopefully in the next few years and I hope to still have enough intellectual ability to get back to writing more, from a much more mature perspective and better understanding of the whole process, so hopefully I will be able to write something that will impact somebodies views at a point in time, maybe two generations from now. Somebody has got to do this somebody has got to keep these schools going, unfortunately we had so few intellectually trained and educated people and capable people, that we are absorbing a lot of our capable people in day to day management of day to day living and we don't have the luxury to set aside that intellectual class to do nothing but think. Not much before my time if you got a doctorate in the Black community it was almost guaranteed you would be a college President, because there were so few out there and somebody had to do it. So as we get more people with a little more depth and human capital we will hopefully get to the stage where we set aside people who think, and help us to understand the world a little better.

Here President Smith describes his path to the presidency. Additionally, he articulates his collective Black identity through his commitment and personal sacrifice to sustaining HBCUs. President Smith also states his lament on the lack of Black researchers who are solely committed to thinking on issues of race and economic equality.

Summary

President Smith utilized the Black identity functions *bridging, individualism, buffering* and *bonding* on his path to becoming a long-term HBCU President. His life story gives hope to Black males in oppressive educational environments and provides tools and strategies for success. His leadership showed elements of both accommodation and protest. President Smith's life story

shows that an HBCU leader needs to be flexible and able to succeed in diverse environments.

President Smith did not have aspirations of becoming an HBCU President, but instead wanted to

provide more resources for research. His desire to improve intellectual pursuits led him to

becoming a Dean and then an HBCU President. Lastly, one of the most compelling narratives

from President Smith's interviews was the following statement, which displays his faith-centered

world view, humility, and intellect. President Smith closes this chapter stating:

> That's just the blessings from God… because you don't make yourself. You don't give yourself any of your abilities. And I had an ability to do academic stuff. I'm very analytical and always have been analytical. I found math and geometry very easy. That was with anything I did that was just who I was, it was a blessing from God.

Chapter 6. The Life of President Lynn

Introduction

To acquire more data on the life narratives of Black male HBCU presidents I traveled 600 miles to interview the third narrator, President Lynn. I interviewed President Lynn at 1) his home in his living room, 2) his office, and 3) a local restaurant. The time I spent with President Lynn informed me on aspects of his identity and leadership qualities. President Lynn has mastered how to function in a racially oppressive culture and have a highly salient Black identity, with an Afrocentric perspective on education. To better understand Lynn's journey to the presidency and how he operationalized Black identity, I will continue to use the four functions of Black identity construct from the Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999) research: *bridging, individualism, buffering* and *bonding*. Then I will discuss how President Lynn's Black leadership philosophy supports or rejects Myrdal's typology of *accommodation* versus *protest*. Lastly, I seek to answer the question: What identity and leadership qualities emerge as conducive to acquiring and sustaining his position as the President of an HBCU?. First, we look at how President Lynn used the *bridging* function of Black identity to cultivate cross-cultural transactions.

The Bridging Function: the use of Bi-or Multi-Cultural Competence

President Lynn is a dynamic leader who uses his understanding of communication as a tool to galvanize teams and create cross-cultural connections. His explanation of effective

communication as a college president shows how he successfully uses the bridging function of

Black identity to cultivate diverse working relationships. President Lynn recalls:

> As a leader of an educational institution, I have the responsibility to facilitate two-way communication. To communicate with people and also encourage them to communicate with me, so we can develop the best possible strategies to make the institution the best it can be. A leader is someone who can effectively facilitate two-way communication, that is, they can effectively communicate to others and they create an environment where others feel comfortable communicating with them. I feel the key to organizational effectiveness is communication, and it can't be one-way it's got to be two-way. Part of that communication is the ability to facilitate levels, you have to be able to effectively communicate up and down.
>
> Patience is key, also understanding where people are and that everybody is not going to be at the same level. And if you're trying to get people to a certain level, you have to first understand where they are and what it takes to move them to where you want them to be. I learned that by getting frustrated with people not being where I think they should be. But generally I'm a very patient person, actually, I have become more patient through my career. I don't like long meetings, but I realize that it's important for people to be able to say what they want to say. So I don't talk a lot in meetings. I listen a lot in meetings and let people get out what they want to say. People often are not wedded to a position they are wedded to the opportunity to say something. And once they are able to say something, then it's more easy to get them to buy into a plan. One develops an identity of a leader by watching others.

Here President Lynn's ability to develop the skills of patience and listening helps him to use the

bridging function of Black identity to form teams. These skills can also be seen as an expression

of *individualism* through President Lynn's unique approach to team building. Additionally,

President Lynn explains how the *bridging* function can be honed over time through the

cultivation of patience. President Lynn states, "I'm a very patient person, actually I have become

more patient through my career."

Another aspect of President Lynn's *bridging* function of Black identity was his concept

of utilizing the brand and national ranking of a predominately white educational institution, for

positive career transactions. President Lynn understood the influence of credentials in American

culture. This understanding shaped the ways in which he sought to make positive exchanges with

specific predominately white institutions. In the following selection President Lynn articulates

this concept when recalling his experience applying to a PWI doctoral program:

> So when I was at Midwest Faith PWI as an undergrad, I applied to Sunshine University, because I had begun to understand that we live in a credential-oriented society. People care about whether you have credentials, and they care about where your credentials come from. At that time, Sunshine University's school of education was number one in the country. I figured the challenge was not going to be that much different from the number one school as opposed to the number 20 or 30 or 40. So why should I go there when I could go to the number one [school]? So to my surprise I was admitted from undergraduate school into the doctoral program.

Here President Lynn's observation was, "people care about whether you have credentials, and

they care about where your credentials come from." In this statement President Lynn shares his

view of adopting a PWI credentials world view. This displays his ability to adopt an alternative

worldview in order to create *bridges* and open inter-racial transactional opportunities. Here

President Lynn's bridge was facilitated when he applied for admittance. If President Lynn had a

less developed understanding of the credentials world view in America he may have never

applied for admittance and possibly never have charted the life trajectory which ultimately led to

becoming an HBCU president.

When President Lynn arrived at Sunshine U he continued to utilize the *bridging* function

of Black identity to form a cross-cultural connection with a Chinese professor. President Lynn

recalls,

> [I was] helped by of one of my first mentors, Xia Su, a Chinese woman… I told her that I was going to be a college president. I was then in an instructor position and she encouraged me to get into a tenured-track position.

Here President Lynn receives a positive exchange of career advice from a Chinese professor who

he calls, "one of my first mentors." President Lynn's ability to bridge friendships across race and

culture helped him to navigate a life course to become an HBCU president. Additionally, during

President Lynn's dissertation work, three white male professors assisted him in the writing process. President Lynn recalls:

> I used to write the first draft of my papers on a yellow legal pad, and I would scratch out every other word and replace it with a word from the thesaurus. Because I thought that intelligence was measured by the length of the words and the length of your sentences. And it wasn't until I started writing my dissertation, working with Larry Cuban, Hank Levin, Mary Mcglacklin, that I realize that intelligence is measured by the extent to which people can understand what you're saying. So for example, I always write in the first-person, even though most publishers prefer that you don't, because I think it's foolish to say "this researcher." Because it makes a person stop and say, "Wait who are they talking about? Are they talking about the person in the last sentence or are they talking about, this researcher, I just say 'I'. When I realized that intelligence was measured by the extent to which people understand what you are saying, I committed to writing my dissertation so that my mother could read it. My mother graduated from high school. She read it. We didn't discuss it in-depth. But she read it. So my writing is something that I take very seriously.

Here President Lynn lists each White male professor by name signifying that these relationships were important to him, and his story of becoming an HBCU president. One may conclude that President Lynn utilized the *bridging* function effectively to form alliances with professors who 'worked' along side him during his dissertation writing process.

In a follow-up interview President Lynn, reflected on his acceptance at Sunshine University and said, "in the final analysis, and the reason they admitted me, was because I had a significant life experience having started a school." As a young adult Mr. Lynn had the rare life experience of starting an African-centered pre-school for Black children who lived in the college town, where he was an undergraduate. Research finds this youth leadership experience helped to form lasting leadership characteristics that remain into his adulthood (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999). This youth leadership experience may also be understood as the *individualism* function of Black identity.

The Individualism Function: Youth Leadership Experiences

President Lynn was unique, he was a young leader. Not many college students had the desire,

intellectual capacity, and natural leadership abilities to start a school while in school. President

Lynn recalls:

> So I go back to Midwest Faith PWI and I was living off campus, but I asked the director
> of the Black student dorm if I could convert her office into a classroom because she
> didn't use it very much. So she said yes, and then I went with a couple of other students
> out into the community to recruit and we got four preschoolers. So in February of 1973
> we started a pre-school called the African History Griots, and the teachers were [college]
> students. I would get everybody's class schedule, and then I would schedule them to
> come in to work. So I would have one teacher for an hour and then another teacher would
> replace them for an hour, and we would do that all day all week long. Then in the
> summer of 1973 we rented a three-bedroom apartment and hired a full-time teacher and
> had 17 children that were three and four years old. Then in the fall of 1973, we rented
> eight rooms on the second floor of a Black-owned nursing home. So we had a guy, 105
> years old, a retired teacher, who would just come up stairs to hang out with the children.
> At that time we had at most 50 children.

Here President Lynn describes the leadership vision, recruitment strategy, management plan, and

real estate growth of a school he started while in college. Through the individualism function of

Black identity a young adult President Lynn could envision a rarely used office as a classroom

filled with preschoolers. The ability to see a unique vision of a preschool and then galvanize a

team to start the school was an enacted of President Lynn's *individualism*.

Later in life as President Lynn expanded his professional career and opportunities he

would also encounter racial prejudice at a PWI, which required the function of psychological

buffering, as protection.

The Buffering Function: Translating Challenges into Opportunities

Early in President Lynn's career he was serving as a well-paid professor at a PWI. The school

had recruited him heavily to join the faculty and he negotiated a highly competitive salary. This

positive transaction from the PWI was a sign of his ability to effectively negotiate positive

transactions with white people, and institutions. However, these transactions did not assure him

shelter from racist insults by White students. President Lynn would need to utilize the buffering

function of Black identity to allow positive transactions to flow through while blocking negative

attacks. President Lynn recalls.

> When I was at Cold University I was standing at the end of a hall, in the school of
> education. The hall might have been about ten times as long as this room. There were two
> other people in the hall, a white student and a white colleague. I was in the hall by myself
> looking at a bulletin. And I could hear bits and pieces of their conversation. They were
> talking about a course that I taught. The student [white] was drilling the professor about
> the course and then finally the [white male] professor said, "Why don't you just ask? The
> professor is right there," and the student turned around and said, "Where? I don't see a
> professor." He couldn't visualize a Black person as a professor. I don't blame the student,
> just like I don't blame the teacher for not giving Black students an equitable experience
> in the classroom. Because it's their experiences both as a student and as a citizen in this
> country. They put them in that position. I don't blame that student because it was his
> experience, his training, his upbringing that put him in that position. So I laugh those
> things off.

Here instead of reacting to the student's comment, which may have been interpreted as offensive,

racist, and disrespectful President Lynn says, "I don't blame the student". Then President Lynn

goes farther in his explanation of how he buffered this racist stereotype by stating "I laugh those

things off". As President Lynn says "laugh <u>those things</u> off," and uses the plural form of the

word "<u>things,</u>" we may deduce this racist insult was not a one-time aberration but rather a regular

occurrence of racism, which required some level of regular mental blocking. President Lynn

shows he effectively used the *buffering* function of Black identity to allow him to have personal

control over racist insults.

Another example of *buffering* negative experiences to translate into positive outcomes

was a story, which occurred during one of Lynn's presidencies where his staff created a hostile,

divisive, and nonproductive work environment. Instead of being deterred by their attempts to

slow his progress he translated these challenges into opportunities and ultimately improved the

fiscal management of the college and bolstered the college's statewide reputation. President

Lynn recalls,

> I had found out three of my vice presidents and the chair of the faculty senate had all
> applied for my position. From the day that I got there, they were in attack mode. The
> faculty senate president had applied three times. He had been promised by a board
> member that he was going to get [the job] when I got it. That guy would not meet with
> me one-on-one the entire time that I was there. Yet we accomplished quite a bit. There
> are 38 institutions in the university system in Lowsouth State, including multiple HBCUs.
> The system rates your financial management operations from one to five. One is the best;
> and five is like criminal malpractice. When I got to South HBCU State College, none of
> the HBCUs had gotten anything other than a five. In my second year we got a two.

Here President Lynn faces a challenge stating, "from the day that I got there, they were in attack

mode". Instead of shrinking to this challenge he blocks out many of the potential negative

attacks, in order to get his job done and drastically improves the fiscal evaluation of the college.

President Lynn uses the conjunction "yet" to signify his success in-spite of attacks by co-

workers. He states "yet we accomplished quite a bit." This inner fortitude that President Lynn

displayed may also be seen as an operationalization of the *buffering* function of Black identity.

President Lynn chose to go to an HBCU to help Black students but instead of being greeted with

a Black *bonding* experience by his co-workers they attempted to undermine his success. These

actions relate to the pre-encounter stage of *Nigresence* (Cross, 1971) where Black people do not

trust other Black people. Psychologist Charles Thomas (1971) describes this type of Black on

Black conflict as misdirected vengeance resulting from a racist society. Thomas writes,

> Stress or uncertainty comes from Afro-American insecurity developing from the
> segregation and dependency imposed upon us. They will be resolved as our desires reach
> fruition through the Black movement. As we succeed our hostility for, and vengeance
> between brother and sisters will be redirected toward those who have mistreated us.
> (Thomas, 1978 p.113)

President Lynn's life experience depicts the complexities that exist within Black people and

Black institutions. Thomas (1978) suggest Black communities should cultivate Black

organizations that can become therapeutic places of *bonding* to cultivate trust between Black

people.

The Bonding Function: Building Black Organizations and Programs

President Smith's *Nigresence* encounter experience or as he describes it his "blackifying"

experience came as a result of (a) a college trip to Africa, and (b) his work in African-centered

pre-school programs. President Lynn recalls:

> A lot of that has to do with the experiences that I've had over the years. I had got
> involved in a tutorial program with a professor named Brother Salam. Midwest Faith
> PWI is a small town—it's about 12,000 now, about 10,000 people then. But it's 60%
> African American. So we were tutoring Black students, basically, and this professor did a
> number of things. I met a number of people who began to influence me—the interest in
> education came in large part as a result of my participation in this program with the
> professor. And the interests in, for lack of a better term, "blackifying" it was because of
> my involvement with this brother as his student assistant. Right around my junior year he
> organized a trip to West Africa. So about 25 African American students went to West
> Africa. We spent most of the time in Ghana, but we also went to Nigeria. One brother I
> met there was an instructor at the University of Ghana. We recruited him to come and
> teach at Midwest Faith PWI. And he became my best friend. He passed away a couple of
> years ago. I met another brother there in Ghana who was also an instructor. He became a
> very good friend of mine also. So it's a combination of experiences. This brother,
> Haruma, had a big influence on my life. He was the president of this organization the
> Council of Black Schools since its inception in 1972 until 1976. I joined the organization
> in 1973, and 1976 I became the president for 11 years—1976 to 1987. And I'm still
> involved in the organization as a secretary. So I started or helped start three independent
> African schools. And that has kept me involved in this movement

President Lynn describes these Black *bonding* experiences in Africa and tutoring children of

color as pivotal life experiences that led to his choice to pursue becoming and HBCU president.

President Lynn recalls:

> It was about this time I started realizing that the further you go in education, the further
> you are from students. And while I enjoy working with all students, I particularly enjoy
> working with African American students. So I started thinking about HBCUs. Then I
> started looking at the presidents of HBCUs.

Here President Lynn states, " I particularly enjoy working with African American students." This

enjoyment from working with African American students made him start thinking about

becoming and HBCU president. It was evident in our interviews that President Lynn cared about

mentoring Black students and coaching all students along the educational process. President

Lynn enacted the Black racial identity functions of *bridging, individualism, buffering,* and

bonding along his path to becoming an HBCU president. The following table displays the four

Black racial identity functions I saw in the narrative data.

Table 10: Functions of Black Identity Found in President Lynn's Life Story

Function of Black Identity Found in Data	Data Collection Method and Reference
(Cross, et al 1999) Bridge function: Bi-or multi-cultural competence refers to those competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that make it possible for a Black person to immerse himself or herself in another groups experience, absent of a need to suppress one's sense of Blackness (p.31)	One-on-one interview • Communication philosophy of leadership • Doctoral application • Chinese mentor • Doctoral Dissertation
(Cross, et al 1999) Individualism: Youth leadership experience, the expression of one's unique personality, in accord with the whims and dictates of the unique aspects of one's self-concept. (p.33)	One-on-one interview • Started school
(Cross, et al 1999) Buffering: An ability to translate challenges into opportunities, ideas and attitudes that create psychological protection from everyday racism, an ability, to filter out racist information, and to let nonracist experiences, relationships, transactions and opportunities flow through". (p.31)	One-on-one interview • White student insinuation • Collogues attacks as president
(Cross, et al 1999) Bonding: Experience building Black organizations and programs, the degree to which the person derives meaning and support from an affiliation with or attachment to Black people and Black culture. (p.31)	One-on-one interview • Trip to Africa • Black male mentors • Choosing HBCU president career path

Black Leadership Typology of *Accommodation* Versus *Protest*

President Lynn is far from an accommodation typology leader. His Afrocentric paradigm and

deep passion to educate Black children is evident. However, in addition to facilitating positive

transactional exchanges at multiple PWIs he also he expressed an understanding of the

accommodation and assimilation mindset of Eurocentric Americans. President Lynn expounds:

> It's like Kenneth Clark and his wife with the dolls and the study that has been replicated, everybody wants the white doll. The whole society reinforces it. It's not just educational institutions. You see the White woman on the side of the car and you get the car because of the White woman unconsciously. We have adopted other people's views of beauty. We look at the world through other people's lenses.
> For example, continents are large bodies of land surrounded by water. There are seven continents, and if I asked you to name the continents you would include Europe. You can't get to seven if you don't include Europe. Europe is not surrounded by water it's connected to Asia and it's not a large body of land. The continent is Eurasia there are only six continents. But the worldview of Europeans continues to teach us to this day that there is seven continents. If I pull out a comprehensive dictionary, it would say a continent is a large body of land surrounded by water, and it would list them. And the first one would be Europe. So there are different worldviews, and people impose their worldviews on other people.

Here President Smith details the dynamic racial forces in American education. This dynamic

understanding of racial forces makes President Lynn a versatile leader and allows him to move

between the *accommodation* paradigm and *protest* conceptions to lead. Similarly another

popular *accommodation* leadership strategy is the notion that the answer to 'save' Black students

at HBCUs is recruiting and admitting more white students at HBCUs. President Lynn explains:

> There is a popular strategy that in order to save Black schools you have to increase the enrollment of white students. I don't think that should be the strategy, but I don't think that we should work against that. As long as we are very clear that the purpose for which the institutions were created is maintained. Culturally relevant education is really important. On many levels HBCUs don't provide a culturally relevant education. But to some extent they emphasize Blackness, and to some extent they reflect the original commitment to Black people. That needs to be maintained, even if it's 50-50 Black and White. So that the White students know when they come to the Black institution, they are coming to a Black institution. Just like when we go to Lower South Lilly, we know we are going to a white institution. I am optimistic that at some point we will provide a more culturally relevant education. (President Lynn interview 3 of 3)

Here instead of promoting a popular *accommodation* strategy (of recruiting more white students

to HBCUs) President Lynn moves back and forth between the typologies of *accommodation* and

protest. President Lynn, while approving of increasing white student enrollment also prescribes

complementary *protest* strategies to "emphasize Blackness" and increase "culturally relevant

education." Then President Lynn goes on to compare and contrast PWIs, HBCUs, and HBCU

faculty stating:

> the only difference between this [PWI] institution and the HBCU across town is the age
> of the textbooks. Because the Black faculty at the HBCU were taught by White people, or
> they were taught by Black people who were taught by White people. There are very few
> radical or race-conscious faculty on HBCU campuses; we don't attract them. (President
> Lynn interview 3 of 3)

Here President Lynn's view is that the majority of faculty at HBCUs operate from an

accommodation paradigm instead of a *protest* paradigm. However, President Lynn does not

assign a value to either typology over the other. President Lynn acknowledges that they both are

important views to understand and process for Black leaders. The vast majority of President

Lynn's narrative embraces an Afrocentric *protest* point of view. However, he also expressed here

that he fully understands *accommodation* motivations and can operate in both typologies.

President Lynn expressed that he cares about Black people and is committed to the educational

growth of the Black community. President Lynn's narrations, which expressed his commitment

to the Black community came from his analysis, critique, and support of HBCUs. He describes

HBCUs as Black educational spaces with the potential to transform educational outcomes for

often overlooked Black students.

> We are still graduating a high percentage, but having said that, I think another factor why
> we might be graduating more is that, more often than not, there is an expectation of
> success at HBCUs. It does not exist for Black students on most predominant White
> campuses. I'm talking here about the Pygmalion effect—if the student is placed in an
> environment where they are not expected to do well, they don't do well. If a student is
> placed in an environment where they are expected to do well, they do well. It's
> confidence, it's not the quality of instruction. HBCUs need more money to be able to lure
> more high-quality African American faculty. (President Lynn interview 3 of 3)

Here President Lynn states, "more often than not, there is an expectation of success at HBCUs. It does not exist for Black students on most predominantly White campuses". President Lynn describes the educational niche of HBCU as Black learning spaces which provide anti-racist teacher expectations for Black students. President Smith also expresses his commitment to the Black community through his expressed need for more money for HBCUs. When posed with a follow-up question on the relevancy of HBCUs in what many scholars describe as a post-racial America, President Lynn responds stating:

> HBCUs are clearly relevant because their undergraduate programs, which are 90% of what they offer, are still sending a reasonable number of students to graduate and professional schools. HBCUs are important because they have the potential to illustrate to people that we can do for ourselves. I think one of the challenges that we have as a people is that we don't love ourselves. We don't love ourselves individually, and we don't love our people, and relatedly, we don't believe we can do for ourselves. So I think that HBCUs are important because they leave open the potential for people to believe that we can educate our own children. (President Lynn interview 3 of 3)

Here President Lynn espouses a philosophy of self-love and Black communal love as one of the antidotes to the educational disparities of Black students. President Lynn's statement "I think one of the challenges that we have as [Black] people is that we don't love ourselves. We don't love ourselves individually, and we don't love our people." It is this Highly Salient (HS) Black racial identitiy and love for Black people, which may be cultivated through a collective identification of Black people in Black learning spaces.

Summary

In closing President Lynn masterfully used the Black identity functions of *bridging, individualism, buffering* and *bonding* along his path of becoming an HBCU president. These four functions of Black identity were identified in the data as leadership tools in his process of personal and professional growth. Additionally, President Lynn's dynamic leadership used both

accommodation and *protest* paradigms to manage, motivate, and mobilize diverse staff at

varying levels of personal and racial identity development.

Unlike the first two HBCU presidents interviewed President Lynn decided early in his

career to plan a 25-year path to become an HBCU president. In closing President Lynn describes,

his plan to become an HBCU president:

> When I got to Cold U, I began thinking about the traditional route to the presidency. Assistant professor, associate professor, tenure, department chair, dean, vice president for academic affairs, then president or chancellor. So I have decided because of the color of my skin that I was going to follow the traditional route. So they couldn't say, "But he's never been this or he's never been that." I had developed this habit from Wall Street of observing the person above me so I could get their job. Not take their job from them but get a comparable job. I developed a written plan to get to the presidency. It had all of those positions in it, and it had the dates when I was going to get those jobs. I still have a piece of paper in my office. Generally speaking, the jobs were going to be five years. Five years as assistant professor, five years as associate professor, five years as a dean, five years as a vice president. so we were talking about 25 years. (President Lynn interview 3 of 3)

Chapter 7. Conclusion

"Those different experiences that you have over the years contributes significantly to your preparation for leadership, or administration"
(HBCU President Thomas, Interview 1 of 3)

Introduction

As HBCU President Thomas states here, life experiences contribute significantly to the preparation for leading. Leadership research is often studied by examining the policy, practices, speeches, and measurable outcomes of the short period of time in which the person served in a leadership capacity (Covey, 1989; Collins, 2001). Studies show the life narrative method can depict how effective leaders use identity as a leadership tool (Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Ligon, Hunter, & Mumford, 2008). Thus, this dissertation analyzes entire life narratives and experiences, which culminate into Black leadership identities. Research finds leadership patterns in adolescence, may lead to the continuation of leadership patterns as an adult. (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999), write "after adolescence, the general personality and social identity profiles for human beings become well established, taking on very distinct patterns." (p.33) Therefore, the greatest tool to understand leadership may be a formative life narrative analysis of leaders.

This study looks at Black leadership through a formative view utilizing the life narratives of three long-term HBCU presidents. Throughout this journey of the thick descriptions of pivotal

life stories of three Black men they communicate narratives of prejudice, pain, peril, purpose, and ultimately promise.

Revisiting the Central Research Question

These life stories combine to inform the central research question of: *What identity and leadership qualities of three Black males emerge as conducive to acquiring and sustaining their positions as Presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities?*

Through the collection, organization, analysis and interpretation of these stories, I learned each path to the presidency was unique, and each president had different motivations for seeking their higher education position. Though each president's life path and motivations were unique some common themes arose from the data: (1) four functions of Black identity; *bridging, individualism, buffering,* and *bonding* (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999), (2) the dynamic navigation of both *accommodation* and *protest* leadership typologies (Myrdal, 1944), and (3) *Collective Black identity* (Price, 2009; Tryman 1978; Tatum, 2003; West, 1999; West and Gates, 1996).

Interpretations of the Findings

In taking a formative view of Black leadership to answer the question; what identity and leadership qualities emerged as conducive to sustained HBCU leadership I concluded the life narrative method was the most appropriate research method. The life narrative method helped me to understand the processes, backgrounds, competing forces, and historical challenges these men faced in their lives. The life narrative method gave me countless examples, and colorful depictions of how these men enacted Black racial identity and used both *accommodation* and *protest* leadership practices (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999; Myrdal, 1944). The findings

in this study were derived through an adaptation of the constant comparison[11] method of analysis.

I use an approach informed by the post-critical ethnographic work of Noblit, Flores, & Murillo, (2004). The post-critical approach to the research process helped me to better understand Black identity and Black leadership through processes, characteristics, people, context, links, multiple meanings, and cultural practices.

Black identity is a fluid concept and Black people have diverse identities, which lay claim to multiple identity reference points (Cross, et al 1999). A recent development in America is the increasing diversity within the Black population. Research on Black socialization and identity transformation finds,

> The Black population in the United States is becoming more heterogeneous, comprising people of different national origins and socioeconomic status with divergent cultures, histories, ideologies, identities and interest. (Rong & Fitchett, 2008 p.39)

Research from psychology finds, "a broad range of identities to be found among Black people" (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999 p.29). Black leaders are not a monolith and don't all place race and Black culture at the center of their identity (Cross & Hagen-Smith, 1996). Each Black male HBCU president in this study navigated life specific to their understanding of self-concept. Black educational researchers Tillman (2002) and Harper (2010) note the importance of anti-deficit framed research which reflects cultural meanings as constructed by the narrators. Emerson (2011) writes:

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[11] *The Constant Comparison Method of Analysis* can be described in four stages (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory [setting boundaries], and (4) writing the theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1965 p. 439). My adaptation of the constant comparison method uses stages 1-3, and does not attempt to form a new theory. Instead my argument presents a analysis of four functions of Black identity and leadership qualities that help to explain how these men became long-term HBCU presidents.

All too frequently, ethnographic field notes fail to attend consistently to member's meanings, instead importing outside or exogenous categories and meanings. (P.131)

With this understanding, I work hard has a researcher to attend to the narrators' meanings. A careful examination of the study data and post-critical discussions with experts in the fields of education, anthropology, sociology, and public administration helped me to structure my study within a body of literature that aids in explaining the identity and leadership qualities that are conducive to sustained HBCU leadership. In comparing the data a pattern emerged that relates to (1) the literature on four Black racial identity enactments: *buffering, bridging, bonding* and *individualism* (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999), (2) the dynamic leadership styles of both *accommodation* and *protest* (Myrdal, 1944), and (3) *collective Black identity* (Price, 2009; Tryman 1978; Tatum, 2003; West, 1999; West and Gates, 1996).

Finding (1): Four Functions (or Enactments) of Black Identity

Four functions (or enactments) of Black racial identity that emerged from the data *buffering, bridging, bonding* and *individualism* are discussed in the *Nigresence* research of Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999). The fifth Black identity function of *code-switching* could not be triangulated in the data[12]. I found the key to working in bi-racial teams with White people came from the narrators embracing 'Blackness', rather then fronting to seem more white in order to accommodate white fears or anxieties. In the Article (2009) *"Nah, We Straight": An Argument*

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[12] The one exception to *code-switching* identified in the data was when President Thomas discussed why Black students in HBCU MBA programs should cut their hair. President Thomas said, "having had the experience I had as Vice President (at a PWI), they saw that as a person being an animal, and when more and Black athletes came with these dreadlocks they saw that he could hit a basket or score a touchdown with these dreadlocks on they said oh, they are smart enough to hit a basket but look at their hair they are ignorant…White America by conceptualization if a person walked in with dreadlocks and applied for job as a junior executive on wall street they would say 'no' because those dreadlocks indicate that person's value or that person's expression, that person is walking around Black power! I'm showing off right now who I am and you must accept me… When White folks see that they get defensive and they say you are looking for a fight because you have dreadlocks you are trying to impose your culture on me" (President Thomas interview 1 of 3).

Against Code Switching by Versham Young the author describes President Barack Obama

leadership through his Black culutural "swagger", affinity for Hip Hop, and meshing of African

American Englidh and so-called Standard Engligh (Young, 2009). Young writes,

> The primary title of this essay is exerpted, in fact, from a popular YouTube video that
> features a dialogue between Obama and a waitress at a pre-inaugural lunchtime stop at
> Ben's Chili Bowl, a popular diner in Washington, D.C. In a crowded room, over the
> voices of people from many different races, the waitress ask Obama if he wants the
> change from the twenty dollar bill he'd given her. "Nah, we straight," he replies. (Young,
> 2009, p.51)

As Young notes here there is a move in education away from *code-switching* as a strategy for

Black people (Prendergast, 2003; Wheeler, 2006). Young sees *code meshing*, the blending of

African American English and so-called Standard English, as a more authentic mode of

communication.

Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999) describe the five functions of identity as, "ways

in which Black identity operates or functions in one's daily life" (p.31). These functions may

also be seen as leadership tools enacted through Black racial identity.

I argue that four functions of Black identity emerged as conducive to becoming long-term

HBCU presidents: (a) the *bridging function*, bi-or multi-cultural competence; (b) the

individualism function, youth leadership experience; (c) the *buffering* function, the ability to

translate challenges into opportunities; and (d) the *bonding* function, experience building Black

organizations and programs (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999). To improve the credibility

of the data interpreted I used the commonly accepted qualitative research tool of triangulation.

Miles and Huberman describe triangulation as:

> a way to get to the finding in the first place—by seeing or hearing multiple instances of it
> from different sources by using different methods and by squaring the finding with
> others. (Miles & Huberman, 1994 p. 267).

Research finds that triangulation helps to locate the central research question, which "traditionally lies inside the neatly aligned boundary of an enclosing metaphorical triangle," (Julie & Hassard, 2005 p.111). The data, like the wide-range of Black men interviewed, is diverse, multivariate, and non sequitur. To streamline the findings, I organize the data into three topics (1) Black racial identity enactments (2) accommodation and protest leadership styles and (3) collective Black identity. I discuss the findings that were common patterns identified in the data, not to depict Black male HBCU presidents as a monolith, but to structure the discussion as three logical lessons learned from this research.

The Bridging Function: the use of Bi-or Multi-Cultural Competence

The first common theme identified in the narrative data is the *bridging* function of Black identity. Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999) define *bridging* as,

> those competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that make it possible for a Black person to immerse himself or herself in another groups experience, absent of a need to suppress one's sense of Blackness. The person moves back and forth between Black culture and the ways of knowing, acting, thinking and feeling that constitute a non-Black worldview. African Americans who are as comfortable by that which makes them American as that which makes them Black (bi-culturality) or who relish sharing experiences with a range of other groups (multi-culturality), are more likely to use the bridging function [of Black identity]. (p.31)

The following Table 11 depicts examples of *bridging* found in the lives of the three narrators.

Table 11: Triangulated Data on the Bridging Function of Black Identity

Narrator	Data	Interpretation
President Thomas	My best friend was a White boy from Mississippi…You found people of all races and religions, but then you found individuals who you could interact with.	President Thomas formed genuine bi-racial friendships across cultures
President Smith	The gentleman who was always trying to undo my beliefs and tried to get me to see it from his prospective, eventually he came around too and as I said we became good friends.	President Smith formed a bi-racial friendship with a white male professor who was trying to 'undo his beliefs'

| President Lynn | One of my first mentors, [was] Xia Su, a Chinese woman... as a leader of an educational institution, I have the responsibility to facilitate two-way communication. | President Lynn forms a multi-cultural mentor relationship with a Chinese professor, and leads through two way communication |

The *bridging* function of Black identity was a common theme in all the president's life stories. This finding, suggest aspiring Black leaders should become proficient in the *bridging* function of Black identity. Cultivating the *bridging* function of Black identity involves embracing the risk associated with cross-cultural interactions. In the article *Cross-cultural competency and multi-cultural teacher education* by McAllister & Irvine (2000) the authors delve into the risks and anxieties associated with developing cross-cultural competence. The research finds these risks include:

> (a) a sense of fear emanating from reflections on culture which people do not have a lot of experience with (b) feelings of guilt and confusion from discussing highly personalized behaviors (c) a sense of frustration and excitement as people uncover new ways of understanding the world and the nature of life (McAllister & Irvine 2000 p.20)

These findings suggest that the use of the *bridging* function of Black identity also requires people to overcome internal anxieties and fear. Thus, the use of the *bridging* function of Black identity which stretches to form bi-cultural and multi-cultural relationships comes from a place of individual courage. Cornel West argues that the lack of "courageous engagement" is the cuase for the deterioration of Black leadership in America. West writes,

> Without a credible sense of political struggle, there can be no shouldering of a courageous engagement -- only cautious adjustment is undertaken. If you stop to think in this way about the source of leadership, it becomes clear why there is such a lack of quality leadership in Black America today. This absence is primarily a symptom of black distance from a vibrant tradition of resistance, from a vital community bonded by its ethical ideals, and from a credible sense of political struggle. (West 1999 p. 57)

The *bridging* function is an act of courageous engagement through bi-cultural and multi-cultural competence. Psychologist Thomas (1978) describes the mentality of Black individuals who

shrink at the opportunity to exercise courageous ngagement by enacting the *bridging* function of

Black racial identity. Thomas writes,

> There are those who romanticize ideals but unrealistic pictures of themselves in order to
> mask feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. These people tend to accept their lot in life
> with explanation such as 'I don't really want to be bothered with white folk' or 'it doesn't
> matter to me what they do'. (Thomas, 1978)

Through a close look at the findings in the data on the lives of three Black male HBCU

presidents I understand the *bridging* function as a leadership tool which can be cultivated

through youth leadership activities. The second function of Black identity found in the data is the

individualism function of Black identity as seen through the youth leadership experiences of the

narrators.

The Individualism Function: Youth Leadership Experiences

Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999) define the *individualism* function of Black identity as,

"the expression of one's unique personality…in accord with the whims and dictates of the unique

aspects of one's self-concept (p.33). The Black identity function of *individualism* found in the

HBCU president data related to their unique experiences of youth leadership. The data found the

three presidents did not see themselves as solely leaders of Black people but did see Blackness

positive aspects of their identity. The construct of the *individualism* function of Black identity

helps to understand how these men formed unique leadership identities as youths and

maintained[13] these identities through adulthood.

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[13] Each narrator had supportive structures and individuals who intentionally nurtured their
leadership identities. For example, structures found in the data included families, churches, Black
schools, and the military. Additionally, supportive individuals included fathers, grandfathers, and
non-biological father figures. These were Black men who invested in the childhoods of the
narrators.

The following Table 12 depicts examples of *individualism as youth leadership* function

of Black identity in the lives of the three narrators.

Table 12: Triangulated Data on the Individualism Function of Black Identity

Narrator	Data	Interpretation
President Thomas	I was valedictorian of my sixth grade, valedictorian of my twelfth grade, senior class President, and President of the student body in my twelfth year. There I learned a little bit about leadership and politics.	President Thomas learned leadership and politics as student body president in 12th grade
President Smith	I guess because I was a volunteering, crazy little 17-year-old they made me a team leader. And I had a little stripe. So I was with the Alpha team.	President Smith's volunteering at age 17 led to him becoming Alpha team leader
President Lynn	I had a significant life experience having started a school…I asked the director of the Black student dorm if I could convert her office into a classroom.	President Lynn started an African-centered pre-school as an undergraduate student

Black identity research finds that youth leaders will most likely exhibit leadership characteristics

as adults (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999). However, Cornel West suggest that the

cultivation of youth leadership has traditionally been an intentional grooming process through

Black supportive institutions such as families, churches, and schools. West writes,

> One reason quality leadership is on the wane in Black America is the gross deterioration of personal, familial, and communal relations among African Americans. These relations [and institutions]-- though always fragile and difficult to sustain -- constitute a crucial basis for the development of a collective and critical consciousness and a moral commitment to and courageous engagement with causes beyond that of one's self and family…. Quality leadership is neither the product of one great individual nor the result of odd historical accidents. Rather, it comes from deeply bred traditions and communities that shape and mold talented and gifted persons. Without a vibrant tradition of resistance passed on to new generations, there can be no nurturing of a collective and critical consciousness. (West. 1999 p.56)

Here West argues that Black institutions may provide a, "vibrant tradition of resistance passed on

to new generations," he goes on to write that without Black training institutions, "there can be no

nurturing of a collective and critical consciousness." Hence Black institutions like families,

churches, businesses, and HBCUs may be key learning environments to cultivate a critical

collective consciousness in youth leaders. President Lynn speaks to the *bonding* power and

potential of HBCUs as 'do for ourselves' institutions. President Lynn states,

> HBCUs are important because they have the potential to illustrate to people that we can
> do for ourselves. I think one of the challenges that we have as a people is that we don't
> love ourselves. We don't love ourselves individually, and we don't love our people.
> (President Lynn, Interview 3 of 3)

I argue that Black leaders need the courage to use the *bridging* function and the foresight to

cultivate *individualism* in young leaders. The third function of Black identity found in the data is

the *buffering* function, which I see as the ability to translate challenges into opportunities.

The Buffering Function: Translating Challenges into Opportunities

Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999) define *buffering* as:

> the ideas and attitudes that create psychological protection from everyday racism. An
> ability to filter out racist information, and to let nonracist experiences, relationships,
> transactions and opportunities flow through. Optimally, buffering prepares one for racist
> encounters, leading to greater personal control. (p.31)

Comparing and contrasting the pivotal life stories of the three narrators a common theme

identified in the data was the *buffering* enactment of Black Racial identity. The following Table

13 depicts examples of the *buffering* function (or enactment) of Black identity in the lives of the

three narrators.

Table 13: Triangulated Data on the *Buffering* Function of Black Identity

Narrator	Data	Interpretation
President Thomas	Whites drove my household into an explosion, by calling and telling us to go back to Africa and take all of them niggers with us, we had to unlist the number... But many whites also came in support.	President Thomas has to unlist his phone number to literally block out racist attacks, yet he allows positive interactions of support from supportive whites
President Smith	I've had plenty of experiences with racism and discrimination. You have to be inner-directed. You never give them… or raise them to the level of standard to where they can hurt you	President Smith blocks out 'racism' from whites, but also recognizes his white male professor as an 'exceptional

	He was an exceptional individual who had no axes to grind…nor was he trying to do anything to hold Blacks back.	individual' and allows positive interactions to flow through
President Lynn	While working at Cold University… a student turned around and said, "Where? I don't see a professor." He couldn't visualize a Black person as a professor. I don't blame the student…So I laugh those things off.	President Lynn blocks out or, 'laughs off,' the racist stereotype comment from a white student, while receiving economic compensation from the PWI and the white student's tuition

The *buffering* function of Black identity acts a psychological filter from racist attacks, while allowing positive transactions to flow through. The blanket assumption that all Whites are racist is too simplified and does not explain the dialectic relationships between Blacks and Whites. Black psychologist Thomas (1978) evaluates scholarly research on Black identity as being a one-sided pursuit only focusing on the Black. Thomas writes,

> Most studies on the Black experience, whether done by whites or blacks restrict the investigation to only one of the subsystems involved (i.e. the black individual) and typically only to attributes said to characterize that system (e.g. self esteem, intelligence, attitudes, etc)… such emphasis on the attributes of [a] single element of the system are misplaced, and that proper focus should be on the entire system; i.e. both blacks and whites or more precisely on the nature of the relationships between blacks and whites (p.35)

Thomas' emphasis for researchers to evaluate both sides of the race discussion, relates to both sides of the *buffering* function of Black identity, which looks at the Black and White experience equally. The courage of the *bridging* function forms bi-cultural relationships and the wisdom of the *buffering* function knows when to form bridges or build protective psychological walls. President Smith elaborates in this bi-cultural point of view in his discussion with his White male professor. President Smith states,

> I said, "that's funny, now, correct me if I'm wrong, discrimination involves two groups in our country—the White group and the Black group. Why is it that the White group can be objective and the Black group cannot?" He (the White male professor) couldn't do anything; his argument was shot to smithereens. (President Smith Interview 2 of 3)

Here it appears that President Smith's conceptions of both sides of the race issue gave him a deeper insight into the question. This deeper understanding of race issues in America may provide lower levels of anxiety when culturally border crossing (Carrillo, 2013). Cross (1999) warns that the aspect of the *buffering* function which blocks out racist attacks " if applied too heavy-handedly, it may limit opportunities for growth and development (p.31). The lesson I learned about the *buffering* function of Black identity from the presidents interviewed is to develop a *buffer* that can quickly block racist attacks or allow positive inter-racial transactions. However, if the *buffer* is not applied at all it may leave an individual open to multiple daily racist attacks which may cause stress and a loss of personal control (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999). When racism occurs it is important for individuals to be open to the healing qualities found in the Black identity function of *bonding*.

The Bonding Function: Experience Building Black Organizations and Programs

Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith (1999) define the *bonding* function of Black identity as, "the degree to which the person derives meaning and support from an affiliation with or attachment to Black people and Black culture" (p.31). Research finds that HBCUs are places where Black people can heal from the scars of racism and find respite amidst white oppression (Halasa, 1989). The following Table 14 depicts examples of the *bonding* function of Black identity found in the lives of the three narrators.

Table 14: Triangulated Data on the Bonding Function of Black Identity

Narrator	Data	Interpretation
President Thomas	President Thomas says he "ended up being crazy" [and took less money to work on an HBCU team] then reflects, "I was glad I did, because it was a young group with new ideas and they were trying to make things better and I enjoyed it".	President Thomas' decision to choose a collective identification with a culturally Black HBCU team and receive less compensation speaks to his understanding of the power of the *bonding* function of Black identity.

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President Smith	That's why people like Malcolm and the [Black] Panthers and the Muslims—that's why they had such a strong emphasis on Black pride and Black power. Because Blacks had been taught that Black was bad…. Some [HBCU faculty] are coming over from your institutions (PWIs), they are saying 'I'm tired of it (racist environments).	President Smith speaks to the importance of Black-centered organizations, Black pride, and Black power. Then President Smith describes why some faculty chose to leave PWI environments in favor of the Black *bonding* at HBCUs.
President Lynn	the interests in, for lack of a better term, "blackifying" it was because of my involvement with this brother as his student assistant. Right around my junior year he organized a trip to West Africa….And while I enjoy working with all students, I particularly enjoy working with African American students...HBCUs are important because they leave open the potential for people to believe that we can educate our own children.	President Lynn recalls the origins of his blackifying experience through a trip to West Africa. Then President Lynn articulates he desire to work with Black HBCU students, and the intrinsic hope of HBCUs and their meaning to Black people.

Finding (2): The Navigation of Both *Accommodation* and *Protest*

In addition to the four common themes of Black identity functions found in the data, this research examined how each HBCU president supported or rejected the leadership typologies of *accommodation* versus *protest.* The book *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy Volume II,* by Swedish social scientist Gunnar Myrdal introduced a binary depiction of Black leadership. Myrdal's typology of accommodation versus protest serves as the basis for much of the research on Black leadership types. Myrdal's analysis was rooted in an understanding of Blacks as sub-human items of property within a white hierarchal caste system.

Myrdal writes: "we base our typology of Negro leadership upon two extreme policies on behalf of the Negro as a subordinated caste: *Accommodation* and *Protest"* (Myrdal, 1944 p.720). Myrdal defined the Black *accommodation* leader as "the "natural"…"normal" … and "most realistic" leadership type for Blacks, to plead to Whites. Myrdal saw the Black *accommodation* leader as dependent and subservient seeking transactional exchanges with the white power and resources. Myrdal writes "the Negroes need a person to establish contact with the influential

people in the White group. They need Negro leaders who can talk to, and get things from, the whites" (p. 721). Conversely, Myrdal defines the *protest* leaders, as suicidal violent militant leaders of slave insurrections- Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner. Myrdal establishes a continuum of Black leadership types that are only examined through a Eurocentric lens, which places each Black leadership type in reference to the leader's ability to form transactional relations with the White power structure.

Mrydal's (1941) *accommodation* Black leadership type relates to Cross' *Nigresence* research as the pre-encounter status, a pro-white and anti-Black point of view (Cross, 1971). Two *accommodation* stories were found in the data the narrators *pre-encounter status*[14] of Black identity.

The findings also support research by Tryman (1976) and West (1999) which suggest a continuum of Black leadership types exist where leaders simultaneously navigate elements of both White *accommodation* and Black *protest*. This dynamic characteristic of the presidents' leadership may have contributed to their success as long-term HBCU presidents. Bensimon (1989, 1990) studied college presidents and found dynamic presidents who used multiple leadership paradigms were viewed as more effective than single-paradigm presidents.

Tryman (1976) and West (1999) write Black leaders are motivated by either personal economic gain or a deeply rooted critical consciousness, both of which are seen through an understanding of a collective Black identification.

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[14] The two exceptions found in the data showing the *pre-encounter status* were: (1) a statement by President Smith: "we got our minds messed up, bought the inferiority business. I remember when I was growing up, if anybody called you Black those were fighting words. Nobody dare call me Black… you was fighting. Black people were embarrassed about Black, they were embarrassed about color, they were embarrassed to mention slavery. Believe it or not, Black people would not eat chocolate ice cream. They were embarrassed to ask for chocolate; they wanted vanilla ice cream," (2) a statement from President Lynn on his 8th grade integrated school experience where states. "I thought all of the white students were just smarter"

Finding (3) : Collective Black Identity

Multiple disciplines see group identity as important to human growth and development. The

construct of *collective Black identity* relates to the collective group identification found in the

research fields of anthropology, political science, psychology and Blacks studies (Price, 2009;

Tryman 1978; Tatum, 2003; West, 1999; West and Gates, 1996). My academic introduction to a

collective understanding of Blackness came through the anthropology work of Charles Price in

his book *Becoming Rasta*. Price (2009) writes:

> Thus, we want to know how people like the Rastafari come to place Blackness
> and religion at the center of their self-concept, how they turn stigma into an asset,
> and how these acts relate to fashioning a *collective identification* called Rastafari
> people (p. 101 emphasis added).

It is this understanding of *collective identification* that makes Price's (2009) research integral to

how HBCU presidents in this study locate highly salient (HS) Black identities within a collective

Black identification. Collective Black identity may be seen as a cultural leadership tool for

HBCU presidents to create and maintain culturally rich spaces that cultivate and reinforce

positive Black educational identities for students of color who prior to their collective HBCU

identification, may have been disinterested in White educational spaces (Calmore, 1995). Black

studies scholar Cornell West views the relationship between individual Black identity and

collective Black community identifications as interdependent relationships. He sees the training

of young Black male and female leaders as a moral commitment to ethical ideals. West writes,

> Where there is no vital community to hold up precious ethical and religious ideals, there
> can be no coming to a moral commitment [to collective accomplishment] -- only personal
> accomplishment is applauded. (West 1999 p.57)

In addition to his reciprocal analysis of Black communal identity, West sees the collective Black

identity journey as an escape from the shared effects of White supremacy. West writes,

The search for Black space (home), Black place (roots), and Black face (name) is a flight from the visceral effects of White supremacy (West and Gates, 1996 p. 88).

This search for space, place, and face that West mentions may occur during adolescence at the cafeteria table. During an interview with President Smith he refers to the Black cafeteria table which serves as a makeshift Black space, where Black group identities can be formed and reinforced. President Smith recalls,

Then one day, one of the brothers said, "What, you think you are too good to sit with us? Why are you sitting over there with the White kids?" And I said, "I don't know, these are the kids in my class." But I started sitting with the brothers (Black students) from then on. (President Smith interview 1 of 3)

During another interview with President Lynn he makes a similar comment referencing the work of Black psychologist Beverly Tatum. President Lynn states,

There was a sizable number of Black children there (in my middle school). It was newly integrated. I didn't hang around any of the white students, I hung around all Black students. You know …who was it… Beverly Tatum who said, why are all the Black students sitting together in the cafeteria. Why are all the white students sitting together? They didn't come over and sit with me when I came in by myself. (President Lynn interview 2 of 3)

Here President Lynn cites the work of Black psychologist Beverly Tatum who examines the group identity work occurring at the cafeteria table. Tatum writes,

One thing that happens is puberty. As children enter adolescence, they begin to explore the question of identity, asking "Who am I? Who can I be?" in ways they have not done before. For Black youth asking "Who am I?" it includes thinking about "Who am I ethnically and/or racially? What does it mean to be Black?" (Tatum 2003, p.52)

This concept of fashioning a collective identity is an important concept to understand when looking at how the Black men in this study formed their individual and collective

Black self-concepts. This concept was identified as important in the literature on Black identity and Black leadership.

One of the most salient themes found in the literature is the concept of *collective Black identity* (group identity) and the positive correlation of collective Black identity and long-term commitment to the Black community. This positive correlation was demonstrated by each of the narrators expressing a collective Black identification and serving as long-term HBCU president. Thus, having a self-concept, which includes, a collective Black identification may help current and future HBCU presidents provide long-term service. Research finds long-term service helps to maintain institutional knowledge which can improve institutional growth (Chetty, Eriksson, & Lindbergh, 2006).

The finding that highly salient (HS) Black identities correlates positively with long-term commitment to the Black community suggest a goal of Black organizations should be to help Black people fashion highly salient (HS) Black identities (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999).

The *bonding* function of Black identity became a routine aspect of the narrator's lives and engrained a sense of commitment to working toward the goal of improving Black people and Black institutions. In contrast, individuals who have a low salience (LS)[15] for Blackness view Blackness as a temporal reference point for their individual identity (Cross and Fhagen-Smith, 2012). This low salience (LS) of Black identity may create unproductive cycles of community engagement and mobilization where people identify collectively as Black only during crisis (i.e. the police shootings of and unarmed Black person) or historical accomplishments (i.e. the election of a Black president). For example, the following census data chart shows the dramatic

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[15] **Low Race Salience**: An evolving self-concept that accords minimal significance to the fact of one's Blackness, other than a nominal sense. (Cross and Fhagen-Smith, 2012 p. 252)

increase of the Black voting rates during the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections of President

Obama. During these election cycles Black voting rates were 2.1 points higher than White voting

rates.

Figure 10: Census Data on Black Voting Rates 1996-2012

Voting Rate Gap Between non-Hispanic Whites and Other Race and Hispanic-Origin Groups: 1996–2012
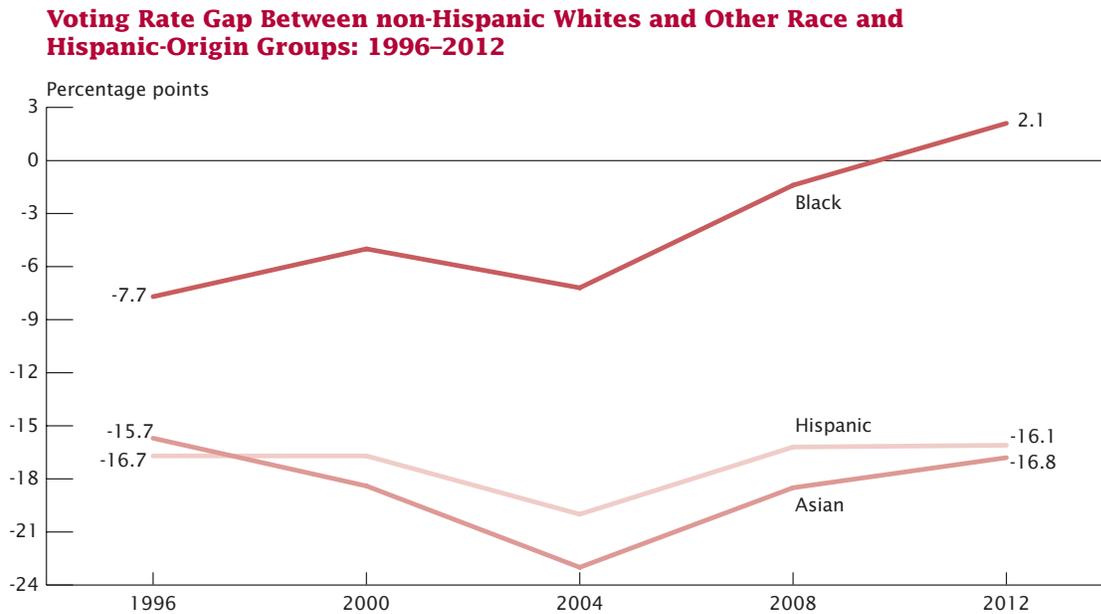
Note: The numbers in this graphic show the differences between voting rates for race groups and Hispanics in comparison to non-Hispanic Whites. For example, in 2012, Black voting rates were 2.1 points higher than non-Hispanic Whites, while Hispanic voting rates were 16.1 points lower than non-Hispanic Whites.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Select Years

The variance here shows the problem associated with low salient (LS) Black identities where

political and grassroots movements find it hard to sustain the momentum needed to create lasting

structural change. Only permanent daily work toward collective Black community goals can

make lasting improvements, which transform the economic and political landscape for Black

people in America. In the article *Patterns of African American Identity Development: A Life

Span Perspective authors* Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2012) write,

> Black youth eventually must develop identity competencies that allow them to transact
> discriminatory, oppressive, and racist encounters (as cited in Wijeyesinghe & Jackson,
> 2012 p. 196)

Fight, Flight or Fit: A Framework for Black Leadership Identity

Research finds that racial oppression of Blacks in America is permanent (Bell, 1993) and has the

ability to morph and remain within American structures (Omni & Winant,1986). Legal scholar

Dana Thompson-Dorsey speaks to the consistent heat of racial oppression and concludes the

following:

> Throughout history the US continuously enters convergence-divergence-reclamation
> cycles where legal remedies for equity and equal opportunities for black and other racial
> minorities were created and then taken away before there could be a demonstrable power
> shift in racial educational and social and economic dominance in this country
> (Thompson-Dorsey & Chambers, 2014 p.82)

To simplify the continuum of approaches to Black leadership, in response to the context of racial

oppression, I adapt the construct of "fight or flight." Milosevic (2015) writes,

> The fight or flight response is the immediate psychological reaction that occurs when
> danger or threat to survival is perceived by an organism. This reaction first described by
> Cannon in 1929 involves a series of neural and physiological mechanisms that rapidly
> activate the body to confront the threat (fight) or to escape it (flight). (Milosevic, 2015
> p.179)

The fight or flight response here relates to the constant daily threats and immediate dangers of

racism. The traditional fight or flight responses represent two divergent *protest* responses to

oppression. I add the term "fit" to represents the strategic *accommodation* or middle ground of

both fight or flight response. The fit response represents an attempt to find middle ground. The

"fit" Black leadership response is too often used as the only strategy to find middle ground with

oppressive forces, institutions, and individuals. To "fit" may mean to *accommodate*, assimilate,

to compromise, or to find a diplomatic solution, which creates a middle ground. Historic Black

leaders who have used the "fit" response would be Booker T. Washington's approach to Black

entrepreneurship and labor as a strategy to infiltrate the larger White economy. Another example of a "fit" Black leadership response would be the historic strategy of many Black politicians such as Carl Stokes the first Black mayor of Cleveland, who appealed to the white electorate by downplaying his racial identity, and espousing white political interest to gain the majority white votes and win as a candidate, who happens to be Black (Keller, 1978). Figure 11 below depicts this construct as a new way of conceptualizing Black leadership within hostile and racist environments.

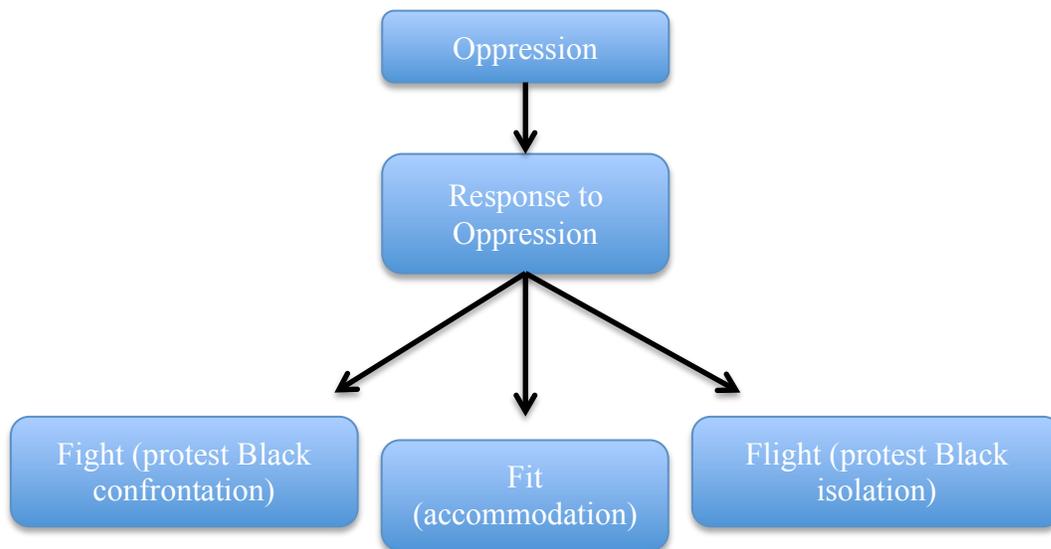**Figure 11: Fight, Fit, or Flight Response to White Oppression**

Table 15: Fight, Fit,or Flight Examples

Fight	Fit	Flight
Nat Turner Fredrick Douglas W.E.B. Dubois Huey Newton, Fred Hampton & the Black Panther Party Bob Marley Ralph Abernathy Medgar Evers Martin Luther King, Jr	Booker T. Washington Mary McLeod Bethune Mayor Carl Stokes President Barack Obama	Marcus Garvey Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, Louis Farrakhan Kwame Turé

Strengths and Limitations

A strength and limitation of these findings is my researcher positionality, as a Black male academic. Research finds that individuals bring "interpretations of … their communities, and their location within a hierarchal society, that are informed heavily by assumptions their assumptions about race and ethnicity. (Sleeter, 2004 p.243). My Blackness can be seen as a strength or limitation to this study. As mentioned in Chapter 1, educational researcher Linda Tillman (2002) conceptualizes culturally sensitive research for African Americans and encourages a culturally informed approach utilizing the following:

- Culturally Congruent Research Methods
- Culturally Specific Knowledge
- Cultural Resistance to Theoretical Dominance
- Culturally Sensitive Data Interpretations
- Culturally Informed Theory and Practice

A second strength and/or limitation is the use of the research tool and method of triangulated life narratives. Triangulation is recognized as strength of social science inquiries, which helps

researchers to locate multiple occurrences to argue for definitive thematic commonalities.

Additionally, this may be seen as a limitation due to the diversity and complexities of the

presidents interviewed it required me as a researcher to leave out some powerful nuances,

alternatives, and selections which could not be located through the tool of triangulation. In

addition, my presentation of common themes may be seen as an inference that these men were

more similar than different, when nothing could be further from reality. Life narrative researcher

Goodson warns,

> the search for 'bloodless universals' is a common theme in scholarship, certainly in
> government-funded research. But in studying life narratives, this would be the most
> dangerous of searches one could commit…this is not to say that some patterns and
> clustering cannot be discerned…[but] these findings are highly culturally contingent.
> (Goodson, 2012 p.26).

A third strength and/or limitation is related to the number and ethnic backgrounds of the

sampling population. The Black male HBCU presidents studied all came from African American

ethnic backgrounds and no participant self-identified as an immigrant (i.e. African, Jamaican).

This homogenous ethnic grouping limits the generalizability of these findings, and does not

speak to the growing number of diverse Black ethnic groups in America (Rong & Fitchett,

2008).

Implications for Future Research

This study sparks new questions on the correlations between high salient (HS) Black identities

and high levels of commitment to the Black community (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999)

A future study which may prove beneficial could inquire about the high salient (HS) or low

salient (LS) Black identities of individuals involved with social movements such as *Black Lives*

Matter to evaluate if there is a correlation between high or low salient Black identities and

community mobilization. A comparative sample may include HBCU alumni and non-HBCU

alumni who attend large Black events, for example, a) CIAA (an HBCU Athletic League) Basketball tournament; b) GHOE (The Greatest Homecoming on Earth) at NC A&T University in Greensboro, NC and c) The Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference in Washington DC. The results of these studies may lead to training interventions, which utilize HBCU mass events as collective Black identity reinforcing activities. Additionally, a snapshot analysis of spending and buying power categorized by Black reinvestment to HBCUs at these events would be beneficial.

Revisiting the Problem, Black Racial Identity, and Black Leadership Development

The *crisis of White glasses* (or Eurocentric models of Black identity and Black leadership) impacts the teaching and learning process for Black male students (Valencia, 2002; Dillard, 2000; Kershaw, 1990, 1992; Tillman, 2002; Harper 2010, 2014). Research finds that identity formation is a *learned* formative process (Cross and Fhagen-Smith, 2012). Therefore, identity formation can also be viewed as an educational process, and it becomes vitally important who shapes the educational process and to what end. As James Baldwin (1906) described Black racial identity may be the most pressing challenge facing Black Americans. Thomas (1971) finds the solution to lost Black identity is *education*, specifically Black studies. When considering the problem of the crisis of white glasses and the literature on collective Black racial identity as a learned formative educational process, which includes Black studies. Situating this inquiry within historically Black educational spaces becomes an important link between the problem, the literature, and the study. Similarly, the literature on Black leadership development emphasizes the ability of effective leaders in helping others to navigate Black racial identity, emotions, and decisions (Tryman, 1977).

Black leadership, as defined here, involves both strategic leadership in its traditional forms, and identitiy leadership on concepts of collective identity and Black pride. With an informed understanding that the *crisis of white glasses* (or *Eurocentrism)* can be addressed through, Afrocentric education (Thomas, 1971; Asante, 1990, 1991; Shujaa 1995), HBCUs stand as Black institutions with the potential to unpack the 'Uncle Tom mindset' *of Eurocentrism* (Thomas, 1971 p.105) and replace it with a critical understanding of Black history and the beauty, brilliance, and balance within Black bodies. *Will this potential be realized at HBCUs and in the lives of HBCU presidents?*

The aforementioned typologies of *accommodation* and *protest* have similar origins in collective representation. Each typology displays a continuum of leadership modalities. Additionally, each typology wrestles with the strategy of adopting a *protest* (fight or flight) perspective or a (fit) pit of view in an effort to *accommodate* the expectations of the white power structure. There also exist in this continuim a sort of trapped pro-Black rhetoric devoid of any deep contemplations on equity, complicity, or strategy (Tryman, 1978). In the future it will require collectively identified and historically educated Black leadership to navigate fight, flight, or fit models.

I define a Black leader as a socially conscious *mapmaker,* who assists people in fashioning their own maps to navigate identity, emotions, and decisions within an oppressive society (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970; Tryman, 1977; West, 1999). The challenge for future HBCU presidents is to become cultural map makers who assist students with the development of identities that are unique, yet hold collective understandings of the Black struggle (West, 1999).

Summary

I began this research quest because of my *collective Black identity* experience at an HBCU. My experience re-shaped the ways I conceive Blackness and shattered the narrative of deficit thinking I was taught in public school. It was these subconscious elements of my own self-conception as a Black male student in America that were detrimental to my internal commitment to the Black community. To answer questions I have about Black identity and HBCU leadership I collected the life stories of three Black male HBCU presidents. These life stories combine to inform my central research question: *What identity and leadership qualities of three Black males emerge as conducive to acquiring and sustaining their positions as Presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities?*

Through this study I learned each path to the presidency was unique and each president used varying aspects of identity enactments and leadership styles. Though each president's life path and motivations were unique some patterns were identified in the data: (1) four functions of Black identity, to include: *buffering, bridging, bonding* and *individualism* (Cross, Strauss, & Fhagen-Smith, 1999), (2) the dynamic navigation of both *accommodation* and *protest* leadership typologies (Myrdal, 1944), and (3) *Collective Black identity*. (Price, 2009; Tryman 1978; Tatum, 2003; West, 1999; West and Gates, 1996).

I found out that there is no easy or definitive answer to my research question but the patterns identified in the data meet the commonly accepted social science research protocol of triangulation. My argument is that four Black identity functions common to all the presidents' life stories were *bridging, buffering, bonding, and individuals*. Each of the presidents used these functions of Black identity in their own unique way to overcome racist environments and navigate paths to become long-term HBCU presidents. Additionally, these functions of Black

identity helped each of the presidents to become dynamic leaders able to navigate both *accommodation* and *protest* leadership styles, while striving to instill a communal sense of collective Black identity at their HBCUs. The lives, laments, and lessons of these Black men teach me that perquisite for becoming an HBCU president is not credential and professional accomplishments but the effective management of diverse relationships.

This study helped me to learn the importance of the soft skills and subtleties of leadership found in the enactments of Black racial identity, like *buffering, bridging,* and *bonding*. Additionally, I learned from the narrators that establishing a confident and unique self-concept *(the enactment of individualism)* as a young person may help to lay the foundation for a lifetime of leadership. I learned leadership should not be narrowly defined as the positions of president, board chair, or chief executive officer. In these conversations the narrators taught me the imperative of cultivating *all* young people to think for themselves and value their uniqueness. In essence this study showed me that all races and ethnic groups are interconnected and we should all strive to see ourselves as leaders and value the uniqueness of every individual.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Q: Where were you born?

Q: Tell me about your parents?

Q: How did you perform in school, and why?

Q: How did you form your identity?

Q: What makes HBCUs unique?

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Consent Form Version Date: __1/15/2014_____
IRB Study # 13-3222
Title of Study: Life Narratives of HBCU presidents
Principal Investigator: Derrick Drakeford
Principal Investigator Department: Education
Principal Investigator Phone number: 9193601053
Principal Investigator Email Address: bluephi@live.unc.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Sherick Hughes
Faculty Advisor Contact Information: shughes@unc.edu

_____

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary.
You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this study is to learn about the experiences of students, administrators, and staff related to graduate diversity.

You are being asked to be in the study because you are a current or former president of a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). The researcher is interested in hearing your perspective on your experience.

Are there any reasons you should not be in this study?

You should not be in this study if you are under the age of 18.

How many people will take part in this study?
There will be between 2 and 4 HBCU presidents

How long will your part in this study last?
The researcher will be conducting (3) approximately 60-90 interviews.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will receive approximately three emails throughout the semester. You can complete the email interview at your convenience.

There are no right or wrong perspectives regarding the issues that you will be asked about in the email interview. The researcher is interested in hearing your perspectives. If you do not wish to answer a question or to write about a topic for any reason, you do not have to answer the question or write about the topic.

The researcher will be the only person that reads your responses to the interview questions. The researcher will not share your answers with any of your collogues or students. Your name will be kept confidential for all parts of the study.

The researcher will not be evaluating you or your performance in any way. The researcher is only interested in hearing what you think about the research topic. The researcher is confident that your contribution to the study will help people better understand the experiences of administrators and staff.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may also expect to benefit by participating in this study by enjoying giving your expert opinion on the topic.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?
A possible risk for you is the inconvenience of taking the time to respond to email interviews. To minimize this risk, the researcher will invite you to complete the email interview at a time that is convenient for you. Additionally the email interviews will contain no more than seven questions and should not take more than thirty minutes to complete.

There is chance that writing about a negative experience may result in emotional distress or embarrassment. Reliving a negative experience could prove distressing and/or embarrassing, but this risk is rare since you will only be asked to answer questions. You need not answer every question. If answering a question makes you uncomfortable, you are free to not comment or skip that question.

There may be uncommon or previously unknown risks. You should report any problems to the researcher.

What if we learn about new findings or information during the study?
You will be given new information gained during the course of the study that might affect your willingness to continue your participation.

How will information about you be protected?
It is possible that someone could figure out who you are even though your name is kept confidential. In order to minimize this risk, the researcher is the only one that will see your consent form with your name and signature on it, this will be kept in a locked file. The researcher's notes and writing will be kept on a password-protected computer to which only the researcher will have the password to access. The researcher will use a pseudonym (fake names) for you. The list that links your name with your pseudonym will be kept on a separate password-protected computer to which only the researcher will have the password to access; your comments and the names list will not be stored on the same computer.

Your responses will be emailed to the researcher's UNC email account which is password-protected and only the researcher knows the password. Upon receipt of email interviews the researcher will replace your name and anyone other names mentioned with pseudonyms and save the file in a password-protected file to which only the researcher knows the password. The pseudonyms will be used during analyses of the study findings. Immediately after a coded copy of the electronic interview is created, your original email will be deleted. I will not share your responses with colleagues, professors, peers, staff, or anyone else. Your identity will be kept private in all discussions, written documents, and presentations related to this study.

Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety. What you write to the researcher will be kept private.

What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete?
You can withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty.

Will you receive anything for being in this study?
You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

Will it cost you anything to be in this study?
It will not cost you anything to be in this study.

What if you are a UNC employee?
Taking part in this research is not a part of your University duties, and refusing will not affect your job. You will not be offered or receive any special job-related consideration if you take part in this research.

What if you have questions about this study?
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions about the study, complaints, concerns, or if a research-related injury occurs, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

Participant's Agreement:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____ _____
Signature of Research Participant   Date

_____
Printed Name of Research Participant

_____
Email address of Research Participant

_____ _____
Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent   Date

_____
Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

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